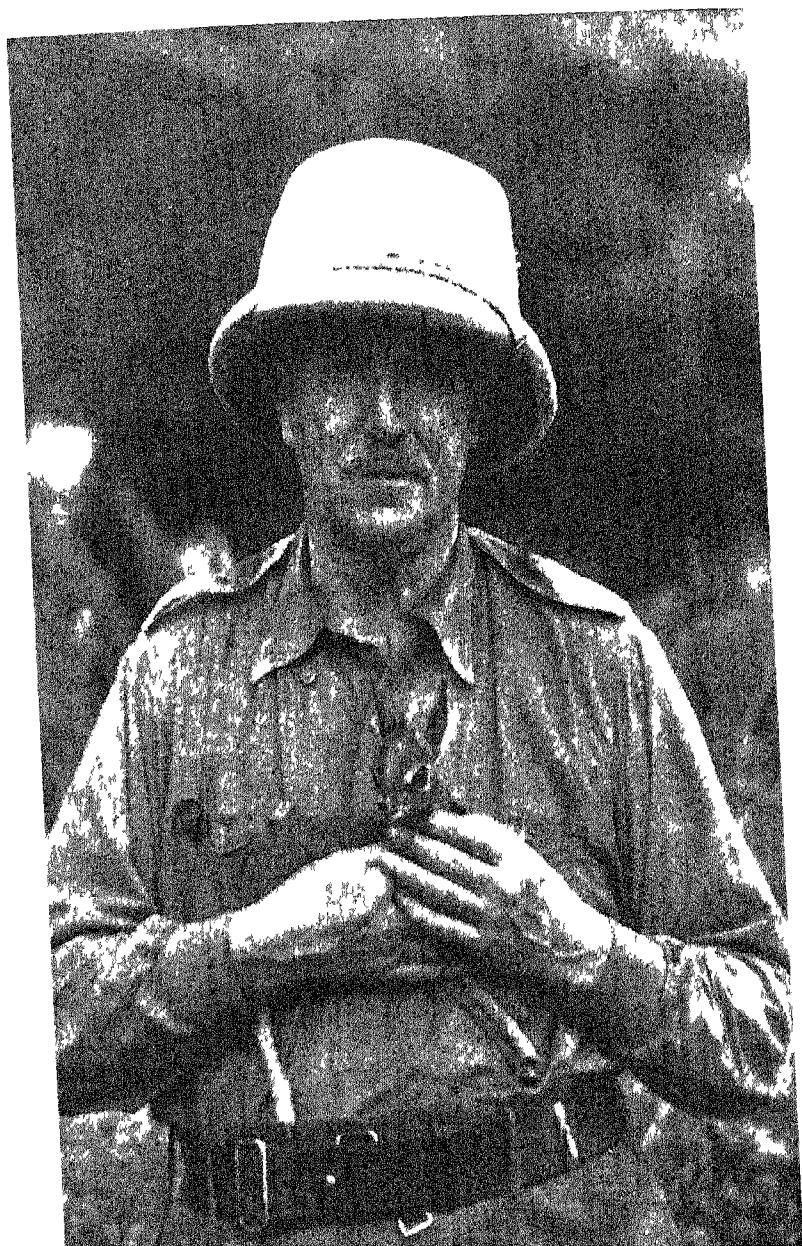


CHERRY KEARTON'S TRAVELS

By the same Author

IN THE LAND OF THE LION
THE LION'S ROAR
THE ISLAND OF PENGUINS
I VISIT THE ANTIPODES
MY WOODLAND HOME
MY FRIEND TOTO
MY HAPPY FAMILY
MY HAPPY CHIMPANZEE
MY ANIMAL FRIENDSHIPS
MY DOG SIMBA
Etc., Etc.



THE AUTHOR

CHERRY KEARTON'S TRAVELS

By CHERRY KEARTON.

Illustrated from photographs taken by the Author



ROBERT HALE LIMITED
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AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

WHY is it that life in the wild places of the earth exerts such a ceaseless fascination upon those who have had the good fortune to travel?

What is it that lures men on to endure untold sufferings and privations whilst they attempt to unfold Nature's mysteries?

Why do men of each succeeding generation go on, and on again, over the trails that have been blazed for them?

Some battle their way towards the frozen regions of the North Pole, others to the ice-fields of the South, whilst there are those who wander far into tropical parts of the world.

During a lifetime of travel, although I have had opportunities to go to the Polar regions, I have always preferred the warmth of the tropics with their vast, mysterious jungles wherein may be seen so great an abundance of native, animal, bird and insect life.

In the course of my exploring expeditions and travels all over the world, I have seen many weird and interesting animals—even outside what is generally known as the Jungle—such as the old-world creatures of Australia and New Zealand, and when I look back over the long period of my years of wandering, and think of all the places, the people, and the creatures I have seen, and the happy times I have spent, which, needless to say, far outweigh the unpleasant ones, and also when I recall the pleasure I have been able to give to my fellow men through films, books, lectures, articles, and wireless talks, I hope that this new volume will carry the reader during these troublesome times into happier realms of thought.

I was the first man to put Central Africa and its varied inhabitants on the cinema screen, and so it gives me immense pleasure to-day to observe that photographic safaris are superseding killing expeditions, for the best weapon with which to approach Nature is the camera, and not the gun.

If the reader seeks a theme in the following pages, maybe he will find it in the form of my personal hope that everybody, everywhere, should not journey through the world blind to the beauty of Nature, or deaf to her music, for all of us who are blessed with intelligence can learn something from the wonderful book of Nature, and thus add immeasurably to the joy of life.

CHERRY KEARTON

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CHAPTER I

MOMBASA

“Nature paints the best part of the picture, carves the best part of the statue, builds the best part of the house, and speaks the best part of the oration.”—EMERSON.

I

AFRICA has designed a perfect prologue to her unending beauty, in the form of coral reefs framing a dangerous winding passage leading into the calm of Kilindini Harbour at Mombasa, meaning “place of deep water”.

On a first visit, one gazes in wonderment at beaches of golden brown, from which rise hundreds of waving coconut palms, divided here and there by roofs of red tiles. As the ship slowly threads her way through the blue waters, waves are for ever rolling in and breaking on the reef, to form a long line of white foam, which, seen against the cloudless blue sky, completes the most beautifully composed picture imaginable.

It is a most impressive pictorial introduction to Africa, and yet it provides but a mere drop-scene to the panorama of beauty and magnificence which this great continent offers, day after day, as the traveller journeys onwards into the interior.

Mombasa is not a town on the mainland of Africa, but an island, and is divided from the mainland by a creek which is crossed by rail and road bridges. It is refreshed by breezes from the Indian Ocean, and parts of it remain unchanged since bygone days. Old Arab dhows rest in its harbour, linking up with the past, when the island was known as the “Island of War”,

when Arab and Portuguese enterprises clashed, the latter crumbling before the mighty weight of the former. It was here in the old Fort of Jesus, built by the Portuguese in 1400, that the great tragedy occurred when its garrison died of starvation in a siege that lasted several years and that ended with the slaughter of a few survivors only a few days before a relief ship arrived. It was here, too, where the Arabs dominated the coast and left their mark on this part of Africa, and, although fast disappearing, remains of Arab occupation are still to be seen to-day. Wealth, ease, magnificence and slavery soon perished when Western influence made itself felt, and, of course, as slavery disappeared the rapid break-up of Arab life occurred simultaneously with the rebuilding of a new order by the British. History makes strange reading when one remembers that only a hundred years ago the Arabs begged some British naval officers engaged in survey work to hoist the Union Jack and provide them with the protection of Great Britain; and in February, 1824, the flag was hoisted and a provisional Protectorate declared by those far-seeing British sailors. However, their efforts were disowned by the "stay-at-home" authorities, and many years passed before the flag of Great Britain was again hoisted on the African coast. To-day, Mombasa is symbolic of the whole of Africa—a land of fascinating contrasts. Suddenly, passing from beautiful wide streets and modern commercial buildings, one is confronted with parts of the old town—quaint Arab houses and narrow streets overlooking the old harbour and the picturesque dhows at anchor. Farther along, facing the sea, are beautiful European homes with colourful gardens, whilst at the back of the island, looking towards the mainland, are the native quarters. Thus divided, three distinct races of people reside on Mombasa, leading entirely different

lives—Arabs, Europeans and natives. In one part, one observes the natives taking life very easily, sitting outside their mud and wattle huts roofed by palm leaves, whilst children, dogs and fowls mingle with them; nearby is the noisy native market where bargaining is just as keen as, and infinitely more animated than, in London's Caledonian Market. Indian and Swahili shops are amongst the others, with every kind of article likely to tempt the native who has money to spend. The native women are well built, wearing long black garments with various coloured materials beneath, creating a distinctive style. Amongst the impressive features of the island are the giant baobab trees and the tall look-out towers, which are of great age. On my first visit I was greatly amused watching the natives enjoying rides on a primitive Earl's Court wheel, which I think gave them more fun and excitement than English people get at home with their more elaborate side-shows. Mombasa's old Fort has been put to many uses, but it is now a prison. It is a grim, blood-stained fragment of Portuguese Colonial history. One of Mombasa's streets is named Vasco da Gama after the great sailor who one sunny day in April, 1498, brought his small ships to the island. On his return to Portugal he told his people he had found "a large city seated upon an eminence washed by the sea"—a description as true to-day as it was hundreds of years ago. The Arab houses still stand as a great monument to the past and it is a pleasing fact that nothing has been done to spoil the charm of the scene. True, the fiery days of old have disappeared, and yet Mombasa has not enjoyed complete peace in modern times, for within my own memory the old Forts have been used, and they are now equipped with the latest type of guns to resist invaders. Indeed, the old Fort of Mombasa, when seen from the sea, is an imposing piece of work, and

to-day its workmanship stands as a monument to the builders of the past. On the top of the wall, close to the spiked doors at its entrance, is a small tower fitted with a clever piece of mechanism that used to raise an alarm. At the entrance now stand smartly dressed armed Askaris who guard the prisoners, very few of whom ever escape.

In 1921, I filmed General Northey, then Governor of Kenya, unveiling a monument outside the Fort to the Arabs who fought along with us and fell in the Great War. I thought then, looking upon the great crowd of Arabs as the white sheet fluttered to the ground, that after all these years of so-called progress men are still fighting each other, but that surely the day will dawn when they will see their folly! However, those who lead the nations of the world, and who ought to have known better, must have had their heads buried in the sand, because as I write we are once again involved in a death struggle for life and liberty.

Gazing upon this panorama of old, old houses, with their flat roofs seeking the sunlight, their doors almost lapped by the waters of the Indian Ocean, and the scattered coconut palm trees tossing their graceful heads at the sky to complete the picture, the mind conjures up the life of the people in the past; and, above all, one admires the enterprise and skill of the Portuguese sailors who found their way through the intricate passage in the reefs of the ocean to Mombasa Harbour.

Although it is over thirty years since I first saw Mombasa, ancient Arab dhows were still to be seen in the harbour last year, just as they were long before the ships of Portugal arrived. They have survived all the changes in maritime life that have taken place through the centuries and continue to discharge their strange cargoes from the Persian Gulf. One cannot mistake their carved

and painted sterns rising high into the air, in contrast with the squat little coasting steamers ploughing their way through these historic waters.

Below Leven House, the Arab sailors still go ashore to the Well of sweet water, as their ancestors did hundreds of years ago. When I first visited Mombasa, there was no wharf and I had to land on a bit of sloping shingle, and during this incident I lost a photographic bag in the confusion.

Now all that is altered for there are wharves for seven ships at a time to tie up, and commercial buildings cover a large space which I knew once as palms and jungle. Trains at that time only ran twice a week, and so on my first visit I had a couple of clear days in which to look round the town. One night, when I was returning to the boat, a big python slowly crossed the road a little ahead of me, and needless to say, I waited for him to disappear—in fact, I gave him enough time to get to the other end of the island! I had had no previous experience of pythons, and I looked anxiously in case more followed, but as none appeared, I continued on my way to the boat.

I saw some fine moths fluttering around the electric lights and several Praying Mantis and other insects alighted near me. Mosquitoes too were very much in evidence so I was careful to use mosquito netting when I went to my cabin, having no wish to contract fever and certainly not just as I was entering the country. Strange to say, although I deserved it, I never caught fever during the six months I was then travelling all over Central Africa, despite the fact that during that time I had been in some bad fever districts. I seldom took quinine, for I had heard so many different views expressed about it by people living up-country; but most of these forgot they were living close on 6,000 feet above sea-level where there

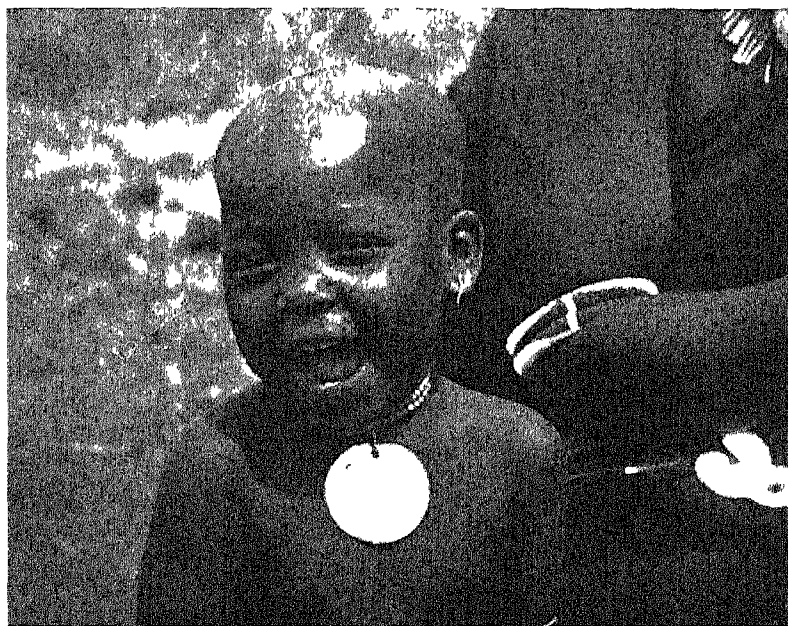
is not much fever. The one occasion when I did take quinine was when I entered the mosquito country, for to see a man down with a bad attack is a lesson to the care-for-nothing individual. However, I had fever on subsequent expeditions, and particularly during the war, when it laid me out very badly, but incredible though it may seem, I have been right in the heart of Africa three times since and never had a recurrence.

II

When the train starts from Mombasa up-country along the island in the warm sunlight, one is impressed by the lovely colouring visible through the coconut palms that rise to a great height on either side; and a thrill of delight is experienced when the native houses, built amongst the spreading mango trees, burst into view with negro children dancing and shouting unrestrainedly at the train and its occupants. The train suddenly emerges from this scene and crosses the long railway bridge over the waters of the creek on the way to the mainland. Immediately, it starts to wind upwards around the hills and during the steady rise one looks down on the beautiful scene of Mombasa Island and its surroundings, and wonders if there can possibly be anything more beautiful. There is a feeling of regret when it has receded from sight, but later, on climbing higher still, there is the pleasure of obtaining another brief view but soon after the forests of coconut trees envelop everything. At the first station, which is only a short distance from Mombasa, a dozen different races are congregated, some staring in bewildered fashion as if they had never seen a train before, whilst others are busy offering for sale a variety of delicious fruits and foodstuffs. Incidentally, the train is most comfortable and indeed always has been since I first rode in it, but is even more luxurious to-day with its



TEACHING A CHILD TO MAKE FIRE BY FRICTION



A STUDY IN EXPRESSION



HE ROARED HIS DEFIANCE



A BABOON ON GUARD



THE WATCHFUL LION

dining saloon and every modern convenience. As the day begins to close in, one feels the darkness bringing with it an eerie fascination from forest, plain, and bush, with their strange animal life. As the train pounds along through dark, mysterious space, a few lights from fires outside native huts appear suddenly and great shouts go up, only as suddenly to fade away again as the train thunders past, leaving a trail of sparks streaming across the darkness. I recall now my first visit to Central Africa when, in the night, filled with excitement at my new surroundings, I jumped down at one of the stations at which we stopped. Like most of these, it had no raised platforms as main stations such as Mombasa and Nairobi have, and no sooner had I alighted to stretch my legs when I heard a voice shouting, "Get back, there are lions about!" This came from a man waving a hurricane lamp. Most of us, when about to visit a new country, have visions of what it is going to be like and as often as not it turns out to be quite different from what we imagined. So it was on my first visit to Central Africa. Instead of great heat, ever increasing as the journey proceeded, I found when I woke at daybreak a great difference in the temperature. It was cold, but invigorating. I then discovered that I was about 4,000 feet above sea-level—the altitude being marked up on each station. I had also expected to see dense, tangled, far-stretching jungle, but looking out of the carriage window in the half light, I observed open undulating country dotted with bushes and small trees, with hills rising in the distance. Then I began to notice, in the dim light, animals such as zebra, wildebeeste, and kongoni, which looked extremely tired to me, as if they had spent a restless night. Most of them were motionless, apparently waiting for the warmth of the sun to bring the day to life. A little later, the hills seemed to become

larger as we wound our way slowly upwards, and then a vast panorama came into view, for we could see, seventy miles away, that great mountain, Kilimanjaro, 19,710 feet high, with its snowcapped top appearing as if actually suspended in the sky—a sight that lives for ever in one's memory.

Travelling on and always upwards to 5,000 feet, we reach the Athi Plains, across which we have to journey about seventy miles to Nairobi. This part of the country is composed mainly of grassy plains almost as treeless as the Great Sahara Desert, but made interesting by the fact that there are thousands of animals of different species either in big groups or dotted about the expanse. What a sight it is for the nature lover! As the train rattled along, some of the animals were within forty yards of the railway line and yet only a few of them moved away, and those that did scampered off for about twenty yards and then turned round to watch us pass. No such sight could be seen anywhere else in the world for here were herds of at least a thousand zebras, five hundred wildebeeste, scores of stupid and awkward-looking kongoni, Grant's Gazelle, Thompson's Gazelle, ostriches, and several secretary birds, hyenas and jackals.

At one spot we came to a dip in the landscape and a small outcrop of rocks. Just about a hundred and fifty yards away in this hollow was a large pool of water almost encircled by a bed of reeds, and only a few yards from the reeds a lion was just turning to walk into them, whilst the animals all round ignored it and continued to graze, and a few looked up casually at the train; yet amidst this apparent calm, a zebra and a kongoni were standing like sentinels, watching every movement of the lion until it disappeared. In the darkness of the night we had passed Tsavo, a station and district famed for its man-eating lions, and it seemed only a few days before,

though actually it was several weeks, that I had taken coffee with Colonel Patterson in a café in Shaftesbury Avenue, when he had told me a great deal about his exciting experiences with man-eating lions when building this very railway.

When the train stopped at the Athi River, on the edge of the Plains, and not far from Nairobi, I became interested in the natives and particularly the Masai, who stood on the platform staring at the train, clad in just a little material covering their bodies, knotted at the shoulder, and armed with long double-bladed spears. These people looked very harmless, and their spears much more unwieldy than the Zulu's assegai, but I little imagined how expert they were in using them, and particularly when fighting a man-eating lion. After leaving this station we climbed for about a mile, and came on to another smaller plain, and from the window I saw a beautiful mirage, a lake with rushes growing around it and high poplar trees in the distance, with animals in the foreground. I have seen many mirages since but never one so beautiful or so fascinating. A quarter of an hour later, we steamed into Nairobi, 330 miles from the coast, and 5,453 feet above sea-level, and I was whirled in a rickshaw for over a mile through the town, with ragged gum trees lining both sides of the street. Nairobi did not impress me very much, as it was mainly composed of wood and corrugated iron, including even the Government Offices and Treasury. The Norfolk Hotel—the only one in the town—was more up-to-date, though it was all on the ground floor and built in a square, with a garden in the centre.

The town was only beginning and was, to all intents and purposes, nothing more than a veld dorp with unpaved sidewalks, and earthen roadways, partly made, and full of holes. In the wet season it was very unpleasant

and in the dry season dust flying through the streets made one long for the rain ! Above the plains, the surrounding ridges were dotted with wooden bungalows, whilst the town itself consisted mostly of Indian bazaars, and transport was chiefly by mules and rickshaws. It would surprise visitors to know that Nairobi is just over thirty years old, and even to-day, I am sure there are many who remember living under canvas in its early stages of development. Where, for instance, the aerodrome now stands, was once part of the Game Reserve, accommodating thousands of animals of every description. I well remember my first Sunday in Nairobi when I was taken for a horse ride by the Game Warden to see the animals on the plains. It was one of the greatest sights in the world, for as far as the eye could see there were animals—nothing but animals, and even to-day, many of them, towards evening, feed close up to the aerodrome as if seeking protection from lions at night. They seem to have grown used to the “giant vultures,” and although they are not in such vast numbers, they remain a sight worth travelling far to see, and I am hoping that the Government will transform the surrounding country and plains into a National Park similar to those of South Africa, before it is too late. On the Sunday afternoon the Assistant Game Warden called at my hotel, at which, I may mention, I was the only visitor, to say that a lion had been seen just outside the lines of the King's African Rifles, about a couple of miles away, so I grabbed my camera and we rushed off. On arriving near the place, an Officer and his wife joined us, and soon after we saw the spoor of the lion, but unfortunately lost it. Both the Warden and the Officer had rifles and we had gone but a short distance after losing the lion's footprints when they asked me to wait. I had my camera ready and felt very thrilled during the ten minutes we waited, and then

I suddenly saw a movement in some foliage about thirty yards away, but no lion appeared and I could not make out what caused it. A minute later, from the opposite direction, the two hunters returned with the news that the lion had cleared. Well, at any rate, I had had my first ten minutes' "lion excitement" !

There were no man-caters within a dozen miles of Nairobi at that time as it was surrounded by thousands of game of every description. Since then however lions have chased zebra into Nairobi, where they even killed one in the school play-ground. That night I was regaled with many stories of hair-raising adventures with lions. The man who had taken me out had been a famous war scout and was responsible for the suppression of a number of notorious outlaws in the Wild West of America.

To-day, Nairobi is a town worthy to take its place as the capital of the Colony, complete with Town-hall, Library, 'Railway Offices, Museum, Cinemas, Temples, Clubs, and extremely comfortable hotels. Entertainments of every kind are provided, even the hotels outside the town having open-air swimming pools. On my last visit, I came to the conclusion there were more motor cars in the streets than in any other town of its population in the world. Men travel to business in their cars, and leave them all day long out in the sun. If prosperity were to be judged by the number of cars, I should say Nairobi must be doing very well. Here can be secured practically everything one needs, and quickly too. I had a khaki coat copied by an Indian tailor in the bazaar, and he completed the order in exactly six hours. It was copied so well that a small hole made by a burn, and with a patch put over it in the original coat, was faithfully reproduced in the new coat !

Around Nairobi there are some most interesting things

to observe, ranging from the various tribes and their modes of life to unsurpassed scenery and European development.

Just out on the plains is a lovely miniature walled-in graveyard where lie several men I once knew, who lost their lives in combat with wild game; and I always pass this spot when on my way to the Lone Tree, which, with its surroundings, is always so intriguing, there being no other place where one may see such a variety of animals.

III

"Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree."

KILMER.

Last year, whenever I had an afternoon to spare I used to wend my way there. The Lone Tree is about five miles from Nairobi, and is so called because it stands in solitary dignity on the vast plains dimly framed by giant hills. To me, that tree stands as a monument to the past. It is a large fig tree, the last of its race, but, to the observant lover of Nature, it forms the centre of a wide circle within which a ceaseless pageant of wild life proceeds. Just beyond it where the track ends, there are a few rocks and one looks down into a small valley where the lion lurks by day, whilst all around are large numbers of different species of animals. In the distance this undulating country is dotted with short thorn trees, except in the valleys where they grow to a considerable height, until the bare Athi Plains are reached, where to-day many of the animals have vanished owing to the land being used for farming. However, around the part where the Lone Tree stands, the territory is still called a Reserve, although even there some Somalis have trekked in and settled. I used to think East Africa had the most wonderful Game Reserves in the world, but a few years

ago I was surprised to discover they were not Sanctuaries in perpetuity as I had hoped, but merely Reserves which, as I have said, have in many instances been entered by both European and Native settlers, and the game has either been destroyed or driven away. I feel that Kenya is very shortsighted in comparison with South Africa, otherwise the authorities would long ago have made the country around the Lone Tree a Sanctuary for all time. Here is an area of approximately twenty-five thousand acres extending to the South of Nairobi along the railway to the Athi Station, and West to the Ngong Hills, which should also be included. This area contains animals of every description, except elephant and hippo, and remains what thirty years ago I described as a "corner of Nature's Zoo"—the country surrounding this immortal Tree being ideal as a Game Reserve. And what memories the lone sentinel conjures up! Far-off days when lions and their families used to play round it, and shelter from the heat of the tropical sun. But when I approached the same spot last year, I saw a luxurious car parked by the Tree and a nurse with two children enjoying a picnic, whilst the chauffeur strolled about aimlessly where once even angels would have feared to tread! Not three hundred yards away a small herd of zebra and wildebeeste was feeding, but at the same time watching the party intently. I journeyed on a short way and upon returning found the car had gone and the animals gathered close to the Tree. I noticed several crumpled-up pieces of paper and the remains of the picnic, proving that even the heart of Africa is not immune from the untidy habits of trippers. I gazed at the Tree whose boughs were bent with age and as the evening breeze sighed through the twisted branches, I felt compelled to collect the offending rubbish, the sight of which seemed a sacrilege. As I moved away I felt

sure that the venerable aristocrat of the once mighty jungle bowed its head in gratitude.

Darkness was rapidly approaching, transforming its shape into a ghostly silhouette, waiting, always waiting for the weird and wonderful events which would occur around it during the night. When on a former visit, I endeavoured to visit the Lone Tree, I failed, because our light box-body lorry stuck in the black cotton soil, for it was at the end of the rainy season. However, my last visit to Nairobi was during the dry season, and so I paid several visits to the Tree, as I then found a good track. On one of these occasions, my old friend, O. M. Rees, great hunter, planter, and now a keen animal photographer, took me in his special photographic lorry, which has an opening in the roof for one's head and shoulders to facilitate the taking of animal pictures. He had this built to his own design for those wishing to go on safari and, to-day, I am glad to say, many have followed my example of shooting with the camera instead of a gun. Incidentally I might mention that it is quite an art getting the car up to photographic distance, and keeping on the right side for light and knowing when to stop. The driver has to watch the animals and also the holes and rocks sticking out of the grass; so there are many pitfalls, demanding experience and knowledge of photography.

We were out early and as the heat grew intense, the animals sought what little shelter was offered by the thorn trees. Meanwhile, I had taken numerous pictures of zebra, wildebeeste and kongoni. Before we arrived at the Lone Tree, several jackals were wandering along a little way off the track and then turned and watched us as we passed. This was just after we had left the aerodrome on our right. The animals, zebra, wildebeeste, and gazelles, had fed close to it during the night

—a strange picture of the modern world encircled by Nature very much in the raw. Several wart-hogs crossed our path and after peering at the car for a few seconds, bolted, with their tails in the air. Later, we encountered a herd of impalla, which also decided to move off as we drove nearer. At the end of the track we rested near the outcrop of rocks from where a good view was obtained of the surrounding country. Although at first sight it appeared to be flat, after travelling a few hundred yards we reached a small valley at the bottom of which were little dongas with pools of water here and there. A few zebra, kongoni and wildebeeste moved away at our approach, but at one of these pools I was astonished to see several storks standing at the water's edge, whilst a couple of dark objects, which I took to be heads, moved about in the pool. I then found they were hyenas wallowing, but before I could stop the car and focus my camera, they had rushed out of the water, and to my surprise, were joined by six more from the bushes close by—the whole crowd dashing up the slope of the hill. Then they halted and looked back at us, which allowed me time to photograph them. And so I decided to try and cross the dried-up stream-bed and follow them, but I had another surprise, for eight more hyenas suddenly bolted out from the bushes and shuffled off with that uncanny gait of theirs up the slope. There were at least sixteen in front of me on the hillside and I felt sorry for any new-born little creatures of the veld which they might meet, for they would have no chance against these loathsome creatures. The hyena eats anything from an animal-hide strap to a dead rhino, and it does not matter how old or tainted a carcass may be, he will devour it. Scavenging is his business and he does it so thoroughly that he has been called the graveyard of the African native. There is abso-

lutely nothing I like about the hyena—his looks, habits and sounds all repel me. He is a very evil pest and ought to be reduced in numbers, as there are far too many. Later that day I encountered another of the hateful tribe wallowing, and my friend, with years of experience in the wilds of Africa, declared he had never before seen hyenas in the water.

Soon afterwards I saw a fine herd of about thirty eland—the largest of the antelope family. They are magnificent creatures, standing nearly six feet high, the males having fine sets of horns, spiral at the base, and almost three feet in length; these beautiful animals are now protected, and, I am pleased to say, are increasing. When we reached the top of the rise, the car was feeling the heat so to speak as it was heavy going, for this is very rough country to travel on; some of it is black cotton soil and there are no tracks. By careful stalking I managed to get very close to a herd of impalla—all males, and as I followed them, I passed a secretary bird, which reminded me, as usual, of one of the thinner members of the Pickwick Club in a swallow-tail coat. He is so different from all other birds, being about three to four feet high, and struts about on long thin legs, which he lifts very high. He selects a suitable patch of ground where he is likely to find snakes, frogs and other small creatures, and then he works to and fro systematically. Immediately he spots a snake he stands erect, jumps forward with wings outstretched, seizes his victim with his feet, and then with his powerful beak secures the creature behind its head, then with a short run he is in flight. He drops the snake from a height, quickly descends, seizes it again, repeats the process until it is almost dead and then dances on it.

Further along, the thorn bush grew thicker and the black cotton soil became too difficult to travel over, but

I secured a picture of a single giraffe, and later was lucky enough to obtain one of a small herd feeding. Travelling in a circle of about six miles we managed to get near some Grant's Gazelle, distinguishable by their beautiful horns. They are light brown in colour and a black line on the body denotes the female. Thompson's Gazelle is also a pretty little creature with a rich coat of pale brown, decorated with a black stripe along the flank and a patch of white beneath. It has beautiful limpid eyes and a short little tail which is never still. It is a most difficult animal to photograph. Numbers of them feed in scattered groups, and if one decides to move, they all follow. Often a kongoni, zebra or wildebeeste will act as a sentinel and when one stalks them with a car it has to be most carefully and patiently done. At certain times, especially very early in the morning or during the late evening, one can approach quite close to them, but ironically enough at both these times the light, for photographic purposes, is useless. In this great open country, dotted with little thorn trees, small herds of animals are always to be seen and when one approaches in a car they look up and stare at the strange box-like object which moves without any legs and then, seeing it is harmless, resume grazing. Usually the animals look in good condition unless there is, or has been, a drought; then most of them suffer, for the native cattle breeders, like the Masai, who live on the Reserve, keep them off the water as they want it for their cattle. I have watched them do this and have seen the game standing perhaps a couple of hundred yards away, looking vainly towards the water. This I consider very cruel, and I am sure it would be a great boon to Nature's wild creatures if a few dams were built which would certainly tide them over the difficult dry season or during a drought. The cost would not be great for native labour is very cheap.

Wildebeeste, or gnu, are grotesque animals, a little smaller than our oxen, and somewhat resembling bison. They have a pronounced mane, white beard, and a greyish coat, slightly striped. Sometimes they are very playful and pretend to fight but never do much real damage. They are full of curiosity and will wait until a car is close to them before moving. By imitating their call a bull can occasionally be induced to come almost up to one, but to the stranger, when a bull emits its furious snorts and paws the ground, danger seems imminent; yet unless wounded it is really quite harmless. When the calves arrive during April the mothers go in herds and lie down in a circle to rest during the heat of the day, and the youngsters lie in the centre for protection. Standing by, giving additional defence, are several males. These animals can move at great speed. One day, near the Lone Tree, by the outcrop of rocks, we spotted a fine herd of impalla—graceful, reddish creatures. They were all females (and therefore hornless) with the exception of one splendid-looking male adorned with long slender curved horns. Some younger males were nearby but were not allowed with the herd. Fierce fights, often ending in death, take place to decide which shall be leader of a herd. I think the impalla is the most expert and graceful jumper in Africa, leaping not only very high but covering long distances too. Another most interesting creature to be seen near the Lone Tree is the bat-eared fox. Over the edge of their burrows their large ears and beady eyes can be seen watching. They are more trusting than those I have met in other parts of Africa; in fact they are almost tame. For hours I watched these little grey foxes with their black legs and bushy tails, lying quite motionless until, perhaps, I went just a little too near, when one would pop down into the burrow and another scuttle off and disappear. Then I would find it was trying to

deceive me by lying flat on the ground, hoping the colour of its coat would harmonise sufficiently with its surroundings to make it invisible. Another animal which is common in the vicinity is the jackal, frequently permitting a car to come very near. When unconscious of being watched they can be seen hunting for insects, turning stones over with their paws and noses. They are particularly clever with their paws in catching beetles and other small creatures.

Within a short distance of the Lone Tree one may encounter wild dogs with their families. When the females are lying hidden away underground for some weeks during the breeding season, the dogs in the pack congregate and sleep in nearby bushes and at the slightest sign of danger to their offspring, show fight very much like ordinary dogs—their manes rising and their tails swishing angrily. Wild dogs hunt in packs, often with a leader, and work on a system when out to catch their prey, which may be a hare or a buck. Their speed when hunting surprised me. I once watched a pack from a small hill hunting on the plains below me; they started up a small buck and it was caught before it had travelled sixty yards. I have known a pack to attack a man for it is while in large numbers that they are dangerous—especially if one happens to approach their breeding quarters. Some people declare their attacking ability to be a myth but a friend of mine had to kill five before they decided to leave him alone.

I stalked some water-buck with difficulty, for they were very shy. They are fine-looking creatures, as large as our red deer, with curious white rings encircling their necks—a design which originated the superstition among the natives that they must not eat the flesh in case the white ring should choke them! And I must not forget the mongoose, of which there are several species. The

white-tailed variety is larger than the others; his colour being grey, plus a long white tail. It is not unusual to see him out in the late evening, but the common mon-goose is seen even more frequently and at all times of the day, and sometimes as one approaches the mound of earth in which he lives, he will take cover in a frantic hurry, whilst at other times he will show no alarm at all. He lives mainly on snakes and other small creatures, but I have photographed one actually nibbling at the leg of a dead zebra, after the scavengers had finished with a lion's kill. The jumping hare is another unique creature. It is about the size of a large rabbit and resembles a miniature kangaroo. It is nocturnal and so the only satisfactory way of seeing it is to go out in a car at night, turn the headlights on and then pick out amongst the countless pairs of shining eyes those of the jumping hare. All the watching eyes of the wild animals appear to have a different glow as they are reflected in the headlights and it leaves one imagining what strange happenings go on when night has fallen and all humans have departed. The eyes of the jumping hare will indicate that nearby is its burrow, in which it sleeps throughout the day; in fact, I have sometimes seen as many as nine pairs of eyes, which I have illuminated to their intense surprise. Of the many species of bird life in this vicinity I must mention vultures, kites, eagles, marabout storks, bustards, spur-fowl, red-legged francolin, and quail. One of the most surprising things is to see yellow wagtails running among the animals' feet, particularly those of wildebeeste, a sight reminding me of my boyhood days in the Yorkshire Dales, where these little birds used to return in summer to breed; and there they ran round the feet of cattle in exactly the same way. At certain times, especially in February, they can be seen in great numbers near the Lone Tree, preparing for their long journey of

thousands of miles northwards. What dangers and hardships those brave little travellers must encounter !

The hammer-headed stork and other varieties of the same family frequent the muddy pools, shuffling their legs in order to frighten frogs, and directly these appear on the water's surface, they are quickly caught and devoured. Greater glossy ibis and crested cranes are also to be seen at the pools. And then there are the weaver birds with their colony of nests.

Sun-birds, spotted king-fishers, and many other species live in this amazingly fascinating corner of the world. Night-jars can be heard in the late evening disturbing the great stillness and owls, which have slept until dusk, pass one like ghostly miniature aeroplanes as they set out to hunt. And a note of gentle calm is created by the cooing of doves, both at morning and evening. Naturally, this corner of Nature's Zoo is not without its lizards and snakes. Of the former, there are the blue and the red-headed species, for ever basking in the sun, and the giant monitor, sometimes measuring five feet in length. Of the snakes, I think the black mamba is the most dangerous, on account of its speed and deadly poison. It measures from six to eight feet. There is also the poisonous puff-adder, which gets its name from its curious habit of blowing itself out before striking. This it does only when disturbed, for usually it prefers to lie perfectly still, trusting to its colour and markings harmonising with the ground thus making it invisible. It is most beautifully marked and some three feet in length. Night adders, cobras, and grass snakes, to say nothing of tree snakes and mole snakes, all add to the fun or the danger, whichever way you like to look at it, whilst the python is generally in evidence near water, lying in wait for some unwary creature coming down to drink.

It will be realised, therefore, that this region is certainly one of the most interesting parts of Africa, teeming with almost every kind of wild life. And mingling with the dangers and the eccentricities of the creatures is a beauty, and a feeling of vastness, which need to be experienced to be fully realised. It is a world apart—a world still not quite spoiled by man, and revolving slowly upon an axis symbolised by that fine old Lone Tree standing in the very centre of this strange land. If only it could speak ! If only I were blessed with the power to interpret its ceaseless whisperings as the wind caresses its branches, I would indeed have wondrous tales to tell of the ways of Nature by day and by night. I can never forget the Lone Tree, growing older, yet apparently ageless, and I hope to return and accept the shelter of its kindly branches some day, when perhaps, through the forethought of man, the region over which it reigns may have been turned into a Sanctuary for ever—to enable the thousands of creatures dependent upon its soil to live and die under its guarding influence. As I departed, my last glimpse of the Lone Tree rising against the sky, forever watching the constant changing of Nature's seasons, and the wanderings of her creatures, reminded me of Keats's famous line— "The poetry of earth is never dead."

IV

To the west of Nairobi, about eighteen miles away, is the Ngong Mountain, generally referred to as hills. It stretches in a long ridge from North to South and is crowned with four peaks standing out like sentinels against the sky. These hills rise to 8,000 feet above the level of the sea, and are at least 2,000 feet above the surrounding country. One of the strange effects I often noticed was that in the constantly changing beautiful light and magnificent cloud effects, the peaks would

Above:

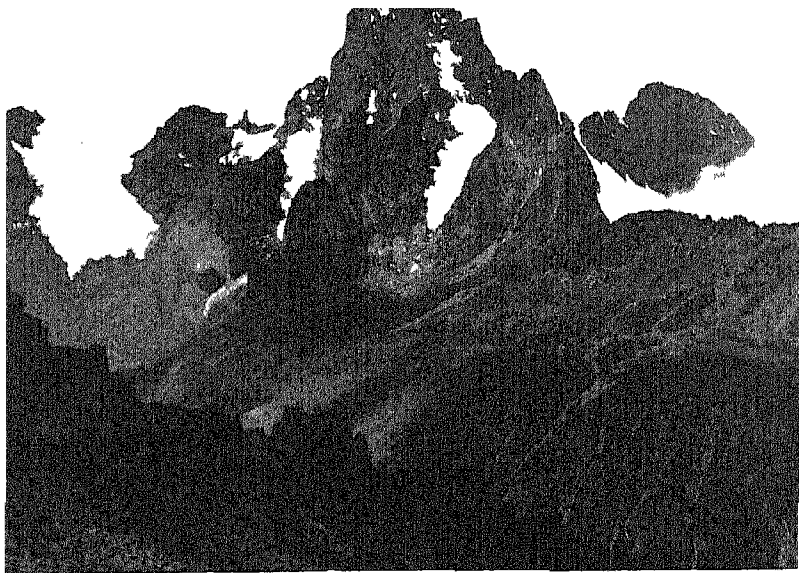
WILD DOGS HUNT IN
PACKS, OFTEN WITH
A LEADER, AND WORK
TO A SYSTEM WHEN
HUNTING THEIR
PREY



Below:

THE FEROCITY OF
THE WILD DOG IS
EVIDENT ENOUGH
HERE





MOUNT KENYA, ABOUT 17,000 FEET, ON THE EQUATOR WHERE YOU MAY
SKATE ALL THE YEAR ROUND

appear to be much nearer Nairobi at certain times than at others when the hills seem to recede and lose their sharp outline. This is attributable to atmospheric conditions, just as on certain occasions I could hardly distinguish a herd of zebra on the plains at the foot of them.

The Ngong can be approached from two directions. From the upper slopes of the hills can be obtained a unique view of the surrounding country. To the south are seen stretches of the vast plains of the game country as far as Kilimanjaro; to the north and east the thinly wooded country of the foot-hills with the forest behind them and the Kikuyu Reserve, with its undulating land, on which can be seen small fields of maize and quite a number of native villages with smoke curling skywards; and right beyond for a hundred miles to Mount Kenya. Then, towards the west, the drop is sudden, falling vertically down towards the vast and mysterious Great Rift Valley with its thorn bushes and winding river beds, devoid of water except in the rainy season, and clusters of the flat-topped and wide-spreading mimosa trees with thorns two to three inches long. My friend Clarke, the Game Warden, very kindly offered to show me the haunt of some water-buck which I wanted to photograph, and accompanied me on the new road which has been made from Nairobi part of the way through the Game Reserve, and which then circles the mountain. After I had seen the water-buck we began climbing upwards until we crossed the shoulder of one of the four peaks, from which I obtained some marvellous views of the surrounding country, including the famous Magadi Soda Lake. If only they had been clear of clouds, both Mount Kenya and Kilimanjaro could have been seen although they are a hundred miles away in opposite directions. They are generally clear in the early morning and evening.

We then dropped down some two thousand feet on the opposite side of the mountain and passed some Masai kraals so close to the road that it is now an easy matter for any visitor to see how these famous warriors live. One can tell when one is near the kraals or "minyattas" for flies suddenly appear and literally cover the traveller. I watched the women repairing their huts whilst the men were leaning on their spears and looking on. Many of the Masai men who guard the cattle carry arms such as spears and short swords, this being a privilege accorded them by the Government, to enable them to protect themselves from lions.

Close by, we saw some of the smaller animals such as Thompson's Gazelle and klipspringers, the latter resting on the rocks. On the upper part of the mountain there are quite a number of buffalo, but I did not see any out. It was too early in the afternoon for them and they hug the cover of the forests until evening. There are also a number of lions in that vicinity. Upon completing three-quarters of the journey round the mountain, the old road from Nairobi is met leading to the Great Rift Valley and soon after that it begins to rise again, to cross the opposite shoulder of the mountain. On the way we passed zebra and giraffe, which stood and stared for a moment at what they obviously regarded as very strange objects. Arriving at the top of the ridge, we found a patch of widened road where we parked the car and sat on the rocks to enjoy the scenery. About ten years ago I often used to run out by car from Nairobi in the late afternoon and look down on this magnificent scene which leads to the Great Rift Valley, where all sorts of animals roam the country below; but alas, there are now not nearly so many of the smaller species; this is due to the fact that this area is not in the Reserve, so that every

* Tom, Dick and Harry who owns a car or a motor-cycle

MOMBASA

rushes out of the town, killing and wounding the animals right and left. I could not help voicing my thoughts and remarked to Clarke on the depletion of the animals, saying what a pity it was the Government had not made the entire mountain a Reserve instead of only taking in a portion of it. Here is one of the finest beauty-spots near Nairobi; rugged, peaceful, and with a grandeur that harmonises perfectly with the general setting and the grace and alertness of the animals—all combining to create a unity of Nature's design.

The Government would do well to add this to the Lone Tree Sanctuary, which I am sure would be appreciated by visitors and by the majority of the people in the town, as well as by the generations who will follow us.

I was indeed sorry to see the animals so thinned out, and wild, except for a few zebra and giraffe. During this round trip almost every animal can be seen except elephant which have long since deserted the forest in these hills; but quite apart from the countless creatures, the wonder of the scenic effects etches itself on one's mind and becomes a permanent, lovely memory.

These hills were dearly loved by Denys Finch-Hatton, a friend whom I greatly admired, and on the last occasion I saw him he had only just returned from the Serengeti Plains, famed for the animals which abound there, lions in particular; and as I was just about to visit these Plains he was most kind and helpful in giving me information and sketches of several little haunts he had discovered. It is this type of Britisher who means so much to a young colony like Kenya—one who was unselfish and always ready to share his knowledge, not only with friends, but for the benefit of the country as well.

One of his pastimes was flying, and he was an excellent pilot, delighting in watching and locating ani-

mals from the air. One day the Colony was filled with gloom, for news came up from Voi that he had crashed in his Moth aeroplane on his way from the Coast, and had been killed. I was told he expressed a wish that if ever Africa claimed him, he should be buried on the slopes of the Ngong Hills, and so his friends carried out his wish. There he lies, sleeping in a setting of magnificence, surrounded by animals, and crowned by the golden sunsets he loved so dearly. His brother, Lord Winchilsea, has erected a monument there to his memory, and, strange to say, a pair of lions which had their home in the neighbourhood could often be seen lying near the grave.

He was one of the few men who drew near to the heart of Nature and understood the ways of her creatures. He always saw a little farther than his neighbour, and discovered, in the skies and the quiet places, a peace known only to those who are free of the chains of civilisation. He would fully endorse those words of Juvenal's: "Nature never says one thing and wisdom another."

CHAPTER II

FROM NAIROBI TO NYERI

"Two voices are there, one is of the sea,
One of the mountains, such a mighty voice
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice:
They were thy chosen music, Liberty!"

WORDSWORTH.

THE next journey I made by car was from Nairobi to Mount Kenya, a distance of a hundred miles, and, on the way, I stopped at Nyeri, where there is now an up-to-date hotel, "The Outspan", owned by Colonel and Lady Betty Walker. In conversation with the latter, I enquired if she was any relation to Lady Dorothy Fielding, whom she greatly resembled, and whom I saw for the first and last time, with an ambulance in the town of Alost in Belgium, during the bombardment. Lady Betty replied, "Yes, I'm her sister." Another strange coincidence was that the hotel was built almost on the spot where I had photographed Colonel Theodore Roosevelt in 1909, when Sir Frederick Jackson, the Governor, gave a big war dance in his honour, to enable him to gain some idea of the wild native life of Africa. Equally strange was the sight of a middle-aged native Chief, with his motor-car and followers, seated outside the Government Offices, for I discovered he was the "boy" whom I showed in my film—the first ever taken in Central Africa—with the Colonel examining a twelve-bore gun the "boy" carried.

Nyeri so pleased me that I nearly bought a piece of land close to the hotel, where I thought I should like to retire, but I had to give up the idea on account of the

altitude. Incidentally, I understand the late Lord Baden-Powell settled in Nyeri—indeed, a very beautiful situation with the snow-capped peak of Mount Kenya dominating the scene. In the distance are hidden away many settlers' homes, one of which is owned by Mr. Carbery, an accomplished airman, who took off from his private aerodrome when I was there, and told me he would be in Nairobi in about twenty minutes ! As I watched him disappear into the sky, I thought of the changes I have seen in Africa in such a short span of time, for a distance which, on my first visit, took me a week's hard walking, Carbery was now covering, without any effort, in twenty minutes. He had two beautiful cheetahs, which watched him as he took off, one of them chasing the machine right down the aerodrome. This remarkable sight reminds me that during my visit, I was surprised at the number of people keeping all kinds of pets.

There is a fine golf-course at Nyeri, and the week before I arrived, a rhino trotted across it, but he was *not* a pet ! I continued my journey by car towards the Western end of Kenya, where there has sprung up a little township, Nanyuki, now approached by a good road instead of the simple foot track which was used by the natives.

Just after leaving Nyeri, the road winds up and down through some thickly wooded country for a few miles before it finally comes out on to the plains which run almost to the foot of the mountain. I had been warned about an old rhino that sometimes wandered near the road as he was going home in the early morning, and, if he happened to smell a car, would at once give chase, for apparently he disliked petrol fumes. Later in the day, however, he could often be seen in the valley under the shade of some tree. As nothing had happened when we got out of the valley, and on to the plains, I

left the car and walked along the steep edge for about a quarter of a mile, and sure enough, there was the old fellow, resting under a tree, and so I sat down for a smoke to watch him. There were no tick birds with him to warn him of any danger, yet during the ten minutes I was studying this huge beast, he was startled twice, and his antics were really amusing. The first time was by a little Dick-dick, and the second by a Horn-bill, both of which gave him the jumps, and on getting to my feet to continue my journey I reflected on the great size of this animal, and his nervous system.

Travelling on, I came to a modern bridge spanning a stream that flowed from the mountain, and recognised the spot twenty yards above where I stood, nearly up to my knees in icy-cold water, to obtain a film record of Colonel Roosevelt and his safari crossing the stream. He was on horseback, and Mount Kenya with its snow-capped top towering overhead had made a most impressive picture. This stream had an added interest now, as it contained beautiful rainbow trout, which thrive well and grow to a great size. As a matter of fact, through the instrumentality of men like Sir Charles Ross, they have now been introduced into many of the rivers and lakes of Central Africa with great success, but fishing in this particular stream has its excitements, for only a few days later, my kindly hostess had a narrow escape. She was sitting on the bank fishing, when hearing a slight sound, she looked round and saw a rhino with his nose pointed in her direction, and ears stuck forward to catch any sound, barely fifteen yards away. However, she kept perfectly still, as all good fishermen can do, and after a lapse of several minutes, the rhino came to the conclusion there was no danger and moved away. From experience, I can well imagine what her feelings must have been.

After studying the scene by the bridge and ruminating how it had all changed since those days, I went on to Nanyuki, still travelling on a very fine wide road, with the plains on our left—the great difference being that there were not nearly so many animals as when I first visited the spot. Looking down the years, I saw again Colonel Roosevelt's fine figure on horseback leading our line of porters with their loads on their heads, marching along a path which is now this very road.

When I arrived at the little township of Nanyuki, I was even more astonished as I realised that it was built on the very place where I, together with the Masai, hunted down and killed man-eating lions. It was here I had some of the greatest thrills of my life which I shall never forget, including the moment when a roaring lion, only fifteen yards away from me, knocked out three men whilst I was but a few yards from them. Now there is an hotel and small homesteads are dotted all over the place. A little way up the slope of the mountain towards the Forest, I observed some cattle, and, strange to say, a big buffalo amongst them. Close by was a charming house with a garden laid out in the old English style, containing many flowers I had not previously seen in Africa. I inferred that the owners wished to be reminded of home, and this was the floral link; and I found that this was the case, and that the property belonged to a Mr. and Mrs. Hook, the former being the son of the artist who has captured, on canvas, many realistic scenes of the mountain and its surroundings. I bought one of his pictures at Rowland Ward's some years ago, and it made a colourful companion to a study of my own which I had made of Kilimanjaro. I was sorry Mr. Hook was away from home as I should have liked to talk to him about Mount Kenya, on which he is a great authority, having done a great deal of climbing over it.

However, we had a most cordial welcome from his wife, and then the buffalo was brought up close to the house with several of the cattle, so that I could see it at close quarters. It seemed quite friendly with the native who drove it up to me, but I had great difficulty in making myself believe it might not suddenly change its mood, remembering my past experiences of these huge beasts. I recalled camping at this very spot when a herd of buffalo, on their way down to the plains to feed, passed close to my tent in the night, and the next morning I had an adventure with two man-eating lions close to a Masai kraal, hardly a mile away from where I was standing. Now all that is altered; the Masai are no longer here, having been moved many miles southward, presumably to make room for the settlers. Looking up at the mountain, and its giant surrounding forests, I remembered meeting Colonel Roosevelt here a few days after he had just escaped being killed by an infuriated elephant.

It was in 1913 when I was marching farther along the slopes of the mountain, that I made a discovery of a strange and tragic nature barely fifty yards from the track on the mountain side. A big round rock, rising to some seventy feet, had stood there since the glacial period, and under its bulging and overhanging front the natives of the district had found shelter from time immemorial. About three days before I reached the spot, a number of natives from the Kikuyu country, on a trading expedition, had reached it as night overtook them, and had crept under the shelter of the rock, which must have projected outwards some fourteen or sixteen feet; and they had lit fires to keep themselves warm, for shortly after sunset the temperature drops very suddenly, and in the early morning is often down to forty-two degrees. Now the fierce sun of noonday beating on this great round rock had heated it like a biscuit in an oven,

and then, as the temperature fell, there had come an icy rain. The fires the natives had lit underneath kept up the heat, and in a little fissure that could easily be traced water must have gathered, and without a word of warning, the huge slab seventy feet high, sixty feet long, and many feet thick, had fallen down upon them, leaving a clean straight line of cleavage. Thus eighteen men and nine women were crushed to death in the fraction of a second. Their bodies, with the exception of two whose arms could be seen, were crushed deep into the earth. I learnt of the number of those so entombed from one of three survivors, who miraculously still retained his mental balance. I could see the place where the escaped men had been sleeping, just out of line of the massive stone. The hyenas had already been at their ghastly work, and had dug out part of two bodies which had been on the outer edge. Scattered around were some blankets and armlets, and at the end of the broken rock were spears, bows and arrows, and over two hundred pounds of native tobacco wrapped neatly in banana leaves. It might be imagined that my porters would have looked upon the tobacco as a windfall, but not a native in my safari would touch a single leaf of it. As a matter of fact, with the exception of my favourite camera-boy, none of them would go near the place after they had once seen it, for most tribes consider the belongings of a dead man are "taboo".

At the back of the mountain only a couple of days before I had had a most thrilling experience with several lions amongst which was a man-eater. However, to revert to more peaceful matters, whilst camped that evening after my experiences, I was filled with the thought that there can be no grander sight in the world than at eventide, when the atmosphere is crystal clear, and one suddenly becomes aware of the snow-capped mountain

standing out in its majesty, seemingly hung in air. The deep, almost solid silence brings realisation of the insignificance of man in comparison with the mighty world of Nature, and a feeling that the vast mountain is the monarch of the indescribable scene. At the same time there comes a longing for adventure, an overwhelming desire to climb to its summit !

Many people have climbed above the snow-line, where there is a lake and good skating to be had all the year round—which, by the way, would make a good head-line for the press: "Skating on the Equator !" No wonder stay-at-home travellers in the early days scoffed at the idea of snow-capped mountains in the tropics !

Turning back towards Nyeri, I thought of the contrast with 1913 when I was returning from an Abyssinian expedition, which took our safari four days from Nanyuki to Nyeri. It is true it was at the end of a four months' safari, when we were all very tired, and I well remember that upon arrival our tea was finished, while three days before the sugar had run out, and there was only enough jam for one more meal. To-day, a quarter of a century later, a car was taking me over the same ground in a couple of hours. When we arrived back at Nyeri I was asked if I would like to spend a night in the "Treetop Hotel", some distance away along the Aberdare mountains. This proved to be a house built in a big tree overlooking a drinking pool, where elephant, rhino, buffalo and many other animals came to drink, and it was so well equipped that one could sleep up there, and when any animals came along at night, merely switch on a search-light, and watch them from a comfortable bed. It sounds too good to be true, but nevertheless is a fact, and gives a great amount of interest to those who otherwise would not be keen on game.

It says something, too, for the progressive ideas of the proprietors of the hotel.

I make it a rule always to see the daybreak in Africa, since it is invariably worth watching both for the marvellous cloud and sky formations, and for the ground effects when the mists begin to rise, forming themselves into lakes, and gradually climbing up the mountain side until at last they blot out the snow-capped top, only to dissolve, leaving it clear again in the evening.

It is always with regret that I turn my back on Mount Kenya, for I have had many happy days around it, and seen some wonderful sights under its shadows. To me it is like bidding a silent farewell to a very dear old friend, whom I may never see again.

On our way back from Nyeri to Nairobi, which led us through the hilly Kikuyu country, we were caught in a sudden rain-storm, and found ourselves slipping from side to side across the earthen greasy road. As there was a sheer drop of several hundred feet beside us, this was none too pleasant. Then, we came to a long steep hill which we had to climb, and by the time we were half-way up, our wheels were buried axle deep in mud and earth. But even that didn't daunt us, and although other cars had fallen to the ignominy of being pushed, we were able to keep going until very near the top, when we had to stop suddenly, because a car came slithering towards us round a sharp bend, *on the wrong side of the road*. It drove straight at us, and then pulled up with its wheels against the bank. After I had remonstrated with the driver, he calmly informed me that he would much rather have crashed into me than gone spinning over the edge into the ravine below—a natural point of view, perhaps, but one which somehow didn't appeal to me at the moment !

However, the sun soon came out, the road surface

rapidly improved, and the world became bright again, especially as we came upon a newly-made stretch, and were soon speeding along at forty miles an hour. It happened to be a Sunday, and we were constantly meeting cars, both great and small, motor-cycles, and, worst of all, a number of decrepit-looking motor-coaches full of natives, who all seemed very happy, shouting and singing as they tore along. These coaches are owned by the Indians, and have native drivers who often try to monopolise the entire road, and it is very difficult to argue with an African-driven motor-bus doing forty-five miles an hour. When half-way back to Nairobi, we branched off at right angles eastward, as I wanted to revisit the Wakamba country, and see some of the Chiefs, natives, and beauty spots again. I particularly wanted to see Kuti and the other natives who took part in a film I made called "Tembi," which had a great success in this and other countries. I was glad to leave the main road, but I had forgotten it was the end of the rainy season, and it was not long before we were in trouble again, skidding all over the greasy earth, and running into holes full of mud and water, so that most of the time it was safer off the actual track than on it. But it was the skill of our native driver which saw us through. Before we reached the kraal where Kuti lived with his family, headed by his father who was the Chief of the district, I recognised a track leading off the main road and down a narrow drive with trees and bush on either side, and I knew that just out of sight there was a settler's house where I once stayed whilst making a picture; so I decided to call and look down again on the magnificent scene of the Wakamba Reserve with the Athi River wandering through it far below me. I noticed the drive had not been used recently, and we had not gone twenty yards along it before I found the road impassable on

account of deep holes and little ant-hills, the holes having been dug out by the aard-vark (ant-bears) whilst searching for ants. And so I left the car, and walked towards the house, but I was almost prevented from reaching it by the growth of wild and cultivated creepers and climbers on each side of the drive, where once there had been a profusion of flowers. It was a gloomy sight, and when at last I emerged, I found only a vacant space where the timber house had stood, now no more save for scraps of wreckage strewn about, and the raised cement floor and bits of glass lying everywhere. Ants had been responsible for most of the destruction, added to the failure of humans to make good on the five thousand acre estate, which now the jungle claimed as its own again. Yet only a few years before, the land had been cultivated and maize, mealies, and tobacco had flourished on it, together with all kinds of fruit trees properly cultivated, with irrigation canals and other evidences of man's agricultural knowledge. Now I gazed upon the derelict scene, from which man's endeavour had passed away like a shadow across the plains, and so had somebody's money and time; I thought sadly, "So this is Africa!"

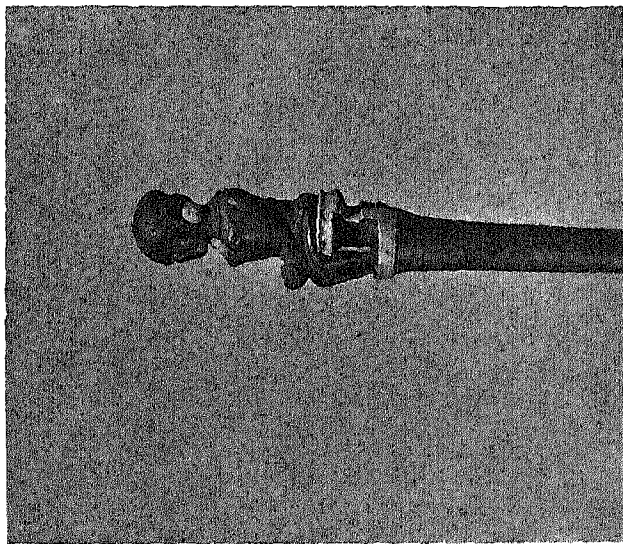
Sometimes, such failure is due to bad luck and circumstances over which one has no control, such as the elements, whilst in other cases it may be due to misapplied effort. Kenya, indeed, has its graveyard of failures, but what new tropical country has not? And after all, it is not fair always to blame the country, for it is far more often the individual who does not suit it or understand it. I resumed my journey, on the so-called main road, but it got worse and worse, the buses and lorries having made deep furrows which had filled with water. I would have left it, but that was impossible as there were so many small trees and bushes. I missed the lovely herd of impalla that I used to see jumping across the

road at this particular point. Once they start to leap over a road or track, they don't seem able to stop; they are magnificent jumpers, and I have had the tail end of a herd jumping right over the bonnet of my car as I drove up to them—the grace and beauty of their performance lingering long in the memory. Ultimately, I came to the place where I had last seen my native kraals—women going about their work grinding corn, milking the cows, weaving baskets, with happy children playing around them, and, close by, herds of cattle and goats, whilst under the trees, the old Chief and his followers were taking pinches of snuff and recounting stories of their victories in days gone by. Such a happy, peaceful scene it was which only a great artist could immortalise.

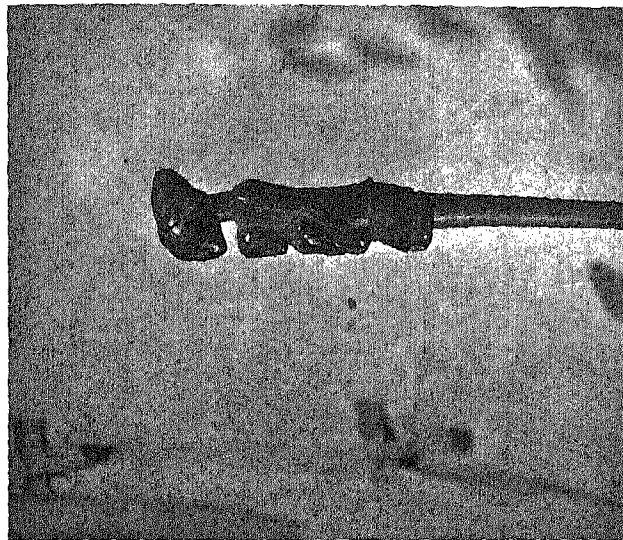
But what of the scene that now met my eyes! Gone were the kraals, the trees, the cattle, the children and everything, and in their place, nothing but miles of sisal and ploughed land. Surely my eyes were deceiving me; this couldn't be the place? However, a close study of my surroundings revealed that it was. Truly an extraordinary change from the wreckage and decay that I had just left on one side of the road, to this most modern and up-to-date machinery and cultivation on the other side. I sent my driver to try and secure information from some natives working near a house on the opposite side of the valley, but I overlooked the tricks played by the clear atmosphere of Kenya, which made them seem barely a mile away, whereas, in reality, they were double the distance. However, he eventually arrived back to tell me the Chief was dead, and the native, Kutu, was now running an hotel some four miles farther along the road—another African surprise—from kraal to hotel! And so we continued, and I was just about to give up, on account of the dreadful state of the road, for I felt sure we should come to disaster skidding from side to side,

when my wife saw some buildings on the roadside half a mile in front of us. On reaching them, we found one was the so-called "hotel"—there being four separate large square huts in a line, made of wattle and mud, with grass roofs. One was a sort of repairing shop and petrol supply for the Indian coaches and other vehicles. Another was the bakery, and walking up to it, I found a rough wooden counter running along the front, though nothing was to be seen of the so-called bakery. There was a grass partition just behind the counter, which screened the rest of the interior from the public eye. From there came sounds of a native singing, accompanied by intermittent thumps. "Hullo there!" I called out, and to my astonishment the baker appeared. There was no mistaking him, for his head was covered with a fine sprinkling of flour, and even his eyelashes, whilst from his hands to his elbows he was smothered in dough. A good deal of flour had also found its way over his black ebony skin and he was showing signs of the heat, though he had but a small piece of calico round his loins. A beautiful set of white teeth, and a grin all over his face completed the picture. I had disturbed him in the midst of his bread-making, which I found, on looking inside, was made in a rough trough—a very, very crude affair indeed. The next house—if one could call it such—was the HOTEL itself, owned by Kuti. It looked like a two-roomed affair, and was closed, the baker informing me that the owner was away for the day seeing his friends. What a happy irresponsible existence! Yet, if one of my countrymen attempted to make a living under such conditions, he would surely starve in a fortnight!

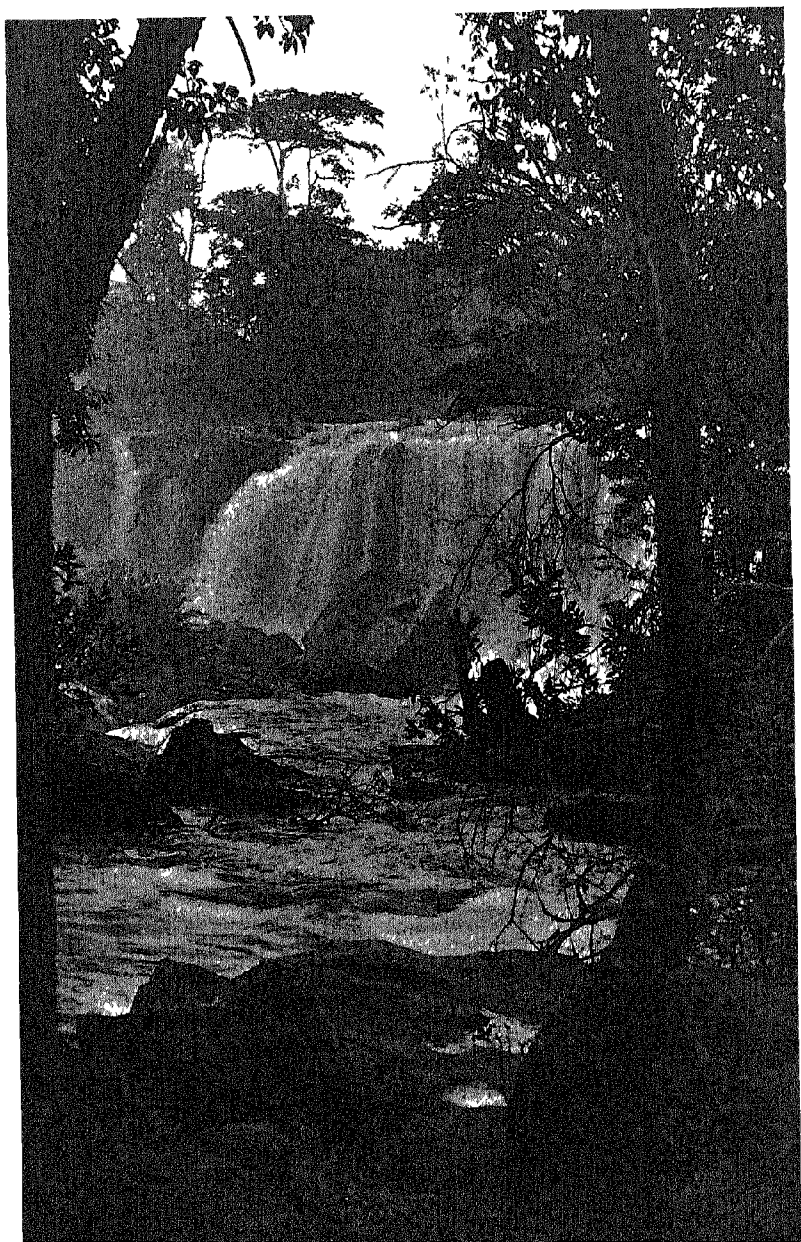
Opposite the hotel was a great mound of bones including many animals' skulls, and around it was a big thorn boma to keep the hyenas off. On enquiry, I



WALKING-STICK CARVED BY A WAKAMBA
NATIVE WHO NEVER HAD A LESSON IN
THIS ART



THIS ZULU WALKING-STICK, CARVED A
HUNDRED YEARS AGO, IS STRIKINGLY SIMILAR,
YET THESE TWO TYPES LIVE NEARLY TWO
THOUSAND MILES APART



THE BEAUTIFUL WATERFALLS OF THE FOURTEEN STREAMS

found a market had been made for bones in Nairobi, and that it paid the natives to collect them. I also discovered that if I went a little farther along, and by the way, a native's "little farther along" might easily mean ten miles, I would find one of my favourite film actors who had since become a wood-carver, and was doing a good trade selling his models of natives and animals to the curio shops in Nairobi. I am giving an illustration of his first efforts, which he presented to me, and it is interesting to know that he never had a lesson in carving in his life, and that out of the thousands of the Wakamba tribe, he was the only one who could do this kind of work. Not only was he clever at carving, but with the crudest of tools made by the village blacksmith, he made jewellery, and delicate neck-chains which held pincers for pulling out hairs from the face, and snuff-boxes cut from the horns of animals. The strange part about the walking stick is that it is almost a replica of the Zulu one made about a hundred years ago, embodying the same idea, and yet this young native lived amongst his own people far away from the civilised world, and 2,000 miles from Zululand! The Wakamba nurse their babies like the model, so he evidently copies his work from life.

As the road was so atrocious, I reluctantly turned homewards and after travelling about three miles in beautiful sunshine, I noticed one of the Indian buses parked, with a crowd of natives around it, and near by one of the familiar grass and mud houses. When I drew up alongside, I saw a Somali gun-bearer I knew, and so I stopped and spoke to him, and also asked the other natives if any of them knew Kuti. Several of them answered yes, and just at that moment he came out of the house with his little wife and stepped towards the bus. When he looked up and saw me he became motionless, as if suddenly fossilised, and then his expression changed

as amazement and pleasure overcame him. "Bwana ! Bwana !" he cried, and then, "Where is Memsahib ?" This was followed by a hundred and one questions, but the driver of the bus began to hoot impatiently, as the passengers strained their heads out of the windows, filled with native curiosity and eager to catch every word. But Kuti was equal to the occasion, and not only put the bus driver in his place, but also made it clear that I was the "Mighty One". Then we were photographed together by my wife. I think I was the more surprised of the two, for I hardly recognised him in clothes, which no doubt he thought befitted the "proprietor of an hotel". They consisted of an old discarded hat that had belonged to a European, a shirt with one arm nearly through the sleeve, and a pair of trousers in holes. Whatever we may say about our civilisation, I think it collapses when one looks at the two illustrations showing what he *was*, and what he is like now, the transformation having taken five years. Whatever the advantages in other directions, I like to remember my native of the past, for this copying of the white man is not found anywhere among the tribes proper, that is, in the reserves. However, the man's affection and his joy in seeing us again were very real, and the time proved all too short for the many things we had to tell and to ask about each other. Once one has gained the confidence of these people, they are very trusting. Incidentally, I knew he was wondering what gifts I had brought him, for I never go empty-handed to any of the natives who have served me, and so I informed him I had left two baskets for him with the baker at his hotel, containing fruit, groceries, tobacco, and beads for his family. I remember his father once asking me if I would take a large sum of money and buy him a second-hand lorry in Nairobi, and looking at the kraal and the simple grass huts around

me, I wondered where he kept such a large sum of money. I put him off by telling him the price of a lorry was nothing compared with the cost of its upkeep, which surprised him, for he seemed to have the idea that the money paid for a car was the only payment necessary, and so he dropped the subject, and he died without becoming the owner of a packet of trouble. Cars are treated very carelessly in Central Africa, and if the makers only knew half their performances out there, I am sure it would astonish them, speaking volumes for their good workmanship.

On the way back to Nairobi I saw the beautiful Waterfalls of the Fourteen Streams; they were in flood, and no more intriguing sight is to be seen in Africa as the water comes tumbling over the rocks, and the spray rises, concealing the trees and landscape on the opposite bank. When a ray of sunlight strikes the shimmering curtain of liquid, it creates a rainbow, whilst below, the foamy water tumbles over and over the rugged rocks in a fascinating way which hypnotises the eye. As I stood watching, my native boy drew my attention to some letters carved on the trunk of a tree, which he told me the great Bwana had done, and, upon examination, I found they had been carved by the Duke of Windsor when on his visit to Kenya. I believe he loved to sit and watch these Falls.

When about twenty miles from Nairobi I turned off to my left to visit my friend Mr. F. J. Nettlefold, who had just arrived from England. After the Great War he bought the Juja Estate of fifty thousand acres, close to the Mountain of Dony-Sabuk, on the slopes of which, by the way, the ashes of Sir Northop Macmillan now lie. He was the original owner of this estate, which he kept as a game sanctuary. One half of it is still kept as such, and the other is devoted to growing sisal. It seemed endless as my car wound its way in and out of this plantation,

and I thought of the days when I used to see thousands of animals there. It was late afternoon, and my sunburnt friend, dressed in shorts, was just returning after spending a few hours down at the Athi River, where there are rock caves and beautiful scenery and plenty of game, which he strictly preserves. He told me a great story about suddenly coming on a lioness playing with her cubs, and how a friend who was with him shot several feet of film on a 16 mm. camera before the animals became aware of their presence. I said, "I'll bet he was a new-comer. It's just like so many things in life—some people get all the luck!" Then I told him of an incident that happened while I was in the Wakamba country in 1921, when I was camped in some hills not far from the Tana River, and, in conversation with a friend of mine who was settled near by, the question of sheer luck in regard to big game came up. He said a young man new to the country had been staying with him, and the day after his arrival he went out for a walk and saw what he thought at first was a bullock lying asleep. When he drew closer, he saw there was a difference in the horns, and taking a chance, shot it dead as it slept. Then my friend, with a laugh, said, "And would you believe it, Kearton, when we came to measure the horns, I'm blown if he hadn't shot a record buffalo!"

Musing over these stories as I sped homewards in the car, John Boyes' homestead came into view—he lives but twelve miles from the town. He was busy writing a novel, which I thought sounded extremely interesting from the rough outline he gave me, but what the publishers and readers will think of it is another matter! The subject he was most keen about was getting recruits for the Legion of Frontiersmen, of which he was Major, having taken the place of the late Colonel Driscoll; but the public seemed very apathetic about it all. However,

a few saw the sense of it, and were joining up, and I am glad to say those I saw were the right kind of material. My own Battalion in the last war was composed mostly of Frontiersmen, and so a dinner was given in my honour in Nairobi, after which I showed them a film of the Battalion marching out of Wellington Barracks, then out of camp under Kilimanjaro, and also some scenes of the fighting. It is a strange thing, nine out of ten people who visit Africa want to go back again. I remember so well in the campaign men cursing the heat as we marched, repeating, "Miles and miles of blue pencil Africa!" But at the end of the war the few left alive who returned to England wrote me wanting to go back to Africa again, and several of them managed to do so and are there now.

In conversation I asked John why there was no one attending to his petrol pump on the side of the road close to his gateway. I ought to explain that his house was about fifty yards away from the road and approached by a drive through a belt of trees. "Well," he said, "you see I had to have a native in charge, and people came along, filled up with petrol, and then, instead of giving the boy money, handed him a chit with a little scribbling on it which the poor wretch could not read, and when I got home and the chits were handed to me by the boy, I could not read them either, as they were merely bits of scrawls to deceive the boy, and so I had to close the pump down, as it was not a paying proposition." It has been said that the sharpers of Nairobi can compare with those of any other town in the world, and I should say tricks like that would put them well in the running, but still we must not judge by the few.

Maithagia, on the outskirts of Nairobi, is fashionable, and some of the dwellings in this district have cost thousands of pounds, and would surprise many people at home, for they are beautifully designed, no two

houses being alike, and have been solidly built, mainly by Indians. Many of the gardens are ablaze with colour, intermixed with tropical ferns, palms, bamboo, and many trees indigenous to the country. It is here that Mr. and Mrs. Klein reside, having spent many years in the country, and owning one of the most outstanding of all the houses. It is built on the old Moorish pattern, and the doors, carved and inlaid with iron, were found in the bush a hundred and fifty miles from Mombasa, and are worth at least one hundred and fifty pounds. The very warm welcome the Kleins give one and the cool pleasant atmosphere of their lounge with its many interesting curios carry the mind into another world. I have known Mr. Klein for many years. He is an American, and told me he used a fleet of motor lorries when taking out parties on safari. What a difference from the old days, when we used to have a hundred boys, and walked from fifteen to twenty miles a day !

Thus my last visit to Africa brought a succession of surprises at the changes wrought by progress—some ruthlessly destroying the natural beauty of the great continent, others, such as improved transport, making her remote features more accessible.

And so we should be grateful for all progress that is made with an eye to the preservation of Nature's wonders, and seek to guide Man's advance along the sane constructive path which Tennyson heralded so dramatically:

“ Forward, forward, let us range,
Let the great world spin for ever
Down the ringing grooves of change.”

CHAPTER III

KILIMANJARO

"... on a throne of rocks, in a robe of clouds, with a diadem of snow."—BYRON.

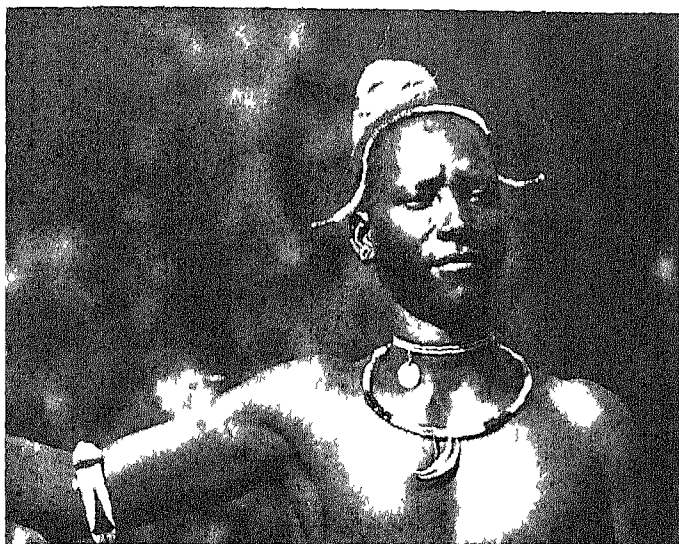
IT is now quite an easy run by car from Nairobi, through part of the Game Reserve, and then for part of the way around Kilimanjaro, to Moshi, and thereafter the road strikes westward to Arusha, which is an accessible jumping-off place for the famous Ngorongoro Crater, and provides a new route to the Serengeti Plains, neither of which anyone should miss when visiting Central Africa. On the way to Moshi, a little township lying in the shadow of the great mountain, game of every kind can be seen.

After crossing the Magadi railway line, one arrives at Kajiado, a small settlement which has sprung into being since the Great War—a place that will always live in my memory for several reasons; for it was here my battalion first camped when we arrived from England in the early part of 1915, and here also I first learnt what it means to be amongst a crowd of men new to the country.

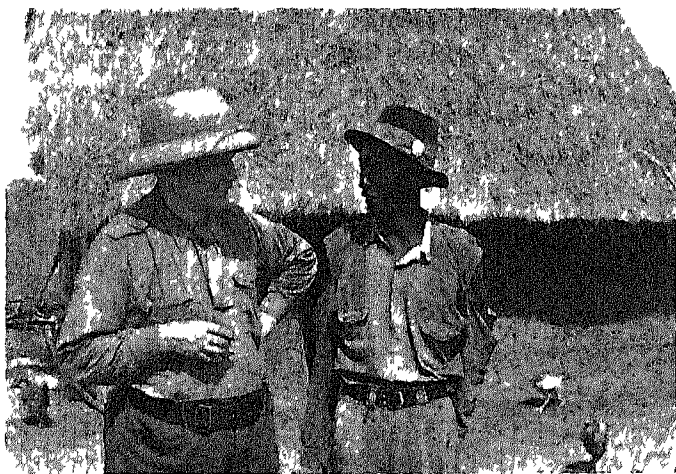
One of the rules when travelling in the tropics is never to camp on an old camping ground, but this rule was ignored by my superiors in spite of my warning, and, as a result, it was not long before sickness and death overtook us. I built a rifle range there, and afterwards took the men out into the open country, where I was able to convince them that the clear atmosphere was one of their greatest enemies when judging distance. They experienced a great deal of trouble finding their way and

were always getting lost immediately they were out of touch with each other or the camp, and especially was this so in the dark. I shall always remember one officer, who happened to be a Canadian and was used to the wilds, setting out with about twenty-five men to discover the reason for a light which someone had observed about a mile away from our camp. Just after he left, a thick mist rose, and about an hour later they arrived at the *opposite* end of the camp, and the outpost would have fired on them had they not heard the men talking English. They had made a complete half-circle without knowing it, and thought they were miles away from the camp. It is equally easy to get *hopelessly* lost in Africa by day as well as by night, and I remember another case of a patrol which went astray not far from the Magadi Soda Lake. Ultimately they discovered their whereabouts, but, unfortunately, their supply of water was finished, and as they marched, the Sergeant in charge suddenly collapsed, and as he could travel no farther, they laid him down under the shade of a bush. A private, also in an exhausted condition, decided to stay with him until the others obtained assistance from the camp. The private, although ill, still had thoughts for their safety, and was sitting up, looking for any danger, when he saw a rhino suddenly appear around the bush, stop, and look towards them, barely twenty yards away. He whispered, "Sergeant, Sergeant!" "Well, what is it?" he groaned. "There's a rhino looking at us!" Another groan, and then the Sergeant mumbled, "Oh, I can't help it, if he don't like to be sociable, he'll have to eat us!"

I remember too, censoring a letter which rather tickled me. It was from one of the men to his sweetheart in London, and ran as follows, "Dear Lizzie, I am not allowed to tell you where we are, but we shall be leaving Kajiado shortly."



MY BOY KUTI IN HIS NATURAL DRESS



KUTI IN HIS RÔLE OF HOTEL PROPRIETOR TALKING TO
THE AUTHOR

From Kajiado to the hill of Longido, the most interesting part of the journey is encountered. On the way is a swamp, almost dried up, where there are elephant, either feeding or wandering about, and it is worth while halting there for a few days, because there is a great deal of varied animal life of intense interest. From this point to Longido, I have always claimed there can be seen a greater variety of animals than in any other part of Africa. The bird life is also very interesting—quite a variety of ground birds like the greater bustard, as well as those that live in trees, being found there in large numbers. Starting out just before daybreak, and going quietly along the road, one will see kudu, gerenuk, and the more usual assortment of common game, and also lion, leopard, and bat-eared foxes. For some time I watched a leopard lying on a rock, gazing with sinister sleepiness at the scene below him, and a little later, a red bush-pig passed close to me. Then I saw the biggest flock of guinea-fowl it has ever been my luck to behold. At that moment I was near the foot of the hill, where there were only a few trees and short grass, and they seemed to spread out in fan-shape as they ran along, making me feel almost giddy, giving the impression that the ground was moving; I should think there must have been two or three hundred of them. Possibly a dozen groups had been to a waterhole near by.

Before I arrived at Longido, I spotted a lion barely forty yards from the road, peeping over the grass, watching the car, but when I stopped, he disappeared amongst some bushes. A little farther along, several giraffe were behaving in a curious manner, two of them seeming especially interested in a bush some distance away. I felt sure there must be a lion about, and so I left the car, and began to walk over to the place about a hundred yards beyond. However, I had only gone

about half the way, when the giraffe all started to move off with that curious loping gait of theirs, and then turned round, and stopped. Just then, I caught sight of a big lion making off, unfortunately out of photographic range. He was not at all troubled, and went leisurely along, until at last he disappeared into a donga.

All the way there were quite a number of giraffe, and at two places I spotted bat-eared foxes, but they popped down a hole when I tried to stalk them. Almost at the end of the mountain the border is revealed, and travellers are stopped by a gate and a customs official, for here is the entrance to Tanganyika. The country is wild, and it struck me that anyone wanting to evade the customs could easily cross the border farther away, and regain the car later on. After leaving Longido, one bears left, for the road to the right goes to Arusha. I had been travelling about twenty minutes when I saw a group of oryx under a large mimosa tree, and an hour later I came on a lot more game, and then emerged on to what was apparently a big plain at the end of which arose a wonderful mirage, forming an entrancing background to the animals, which appeared in relief as they walked in front of it. I remember remarking that it had the usual poplar-like trees in the background, which gave a strange impression of unreality, because they are a sight far removed from Africa. Eventually we reached Moshi, and after a cup of tea at the hotel, I stepped outside, and was amazed to find myself confronted by a magnificent view of Kilimanjaro, which had become visible during the brief period I had been inside. From this angle it looked quite different.

Kilimanjaro was first climbed in 1889 by Dr. Hans Mayer, and has been similarly conquered on several subsequent occasions, but the honour for the first woman to climb it goes to Miss Sheila MacDonald.

About three-quarters of a mile nearer the mountain I found Delamot again. Our first meeting had been on a rubber plantation in North British Borneo in 1910, and the second time I saw him was when I discovered he was in my battalion when we paraded outside our headquarters in London, and after the war I found he was among those who had returned to Africa, where he had bought a small coffee plantation, and was settled under the majestic brow of Kilimanjaro, so I decided to pay him a visit. He had two of the finest leopards as pets I ever saw, and the surprising thing was that their cage was composed merely of old rusty chicken wire, broken in several places. One side of the cage was attached to his house, one of the rooms of which had been given over to the leopards for their sleeping quarters. After leaving me for a few moments, he reappeared inside the cage, from the house, and the animals made a great fuss of him, playing around him like kittens, each trying to secure a piece of rag he had given them when he entered the cage. Over and over they rolled, and jumped, sometimes chasing each other round the cage, whilst Delamot stroked their heads, or gave them affectionate pats whenever they came near. It was a wonderful sight, and I was lost in admiration of the control he had over these two beautiful, but essentially wild creatures. Nevertheless, I was relieved when he left them and returned to my side.

"That was an interesting exhibition, Delamot," I said; "nevertheless, I don't trust them." Thus I warned him of his danger, but he laughed and said, "Darby and Joan will never harm me." Then he added, "Didn't you notice how they each tried to possess that piece of rag I gave them, when I entered the cage? That's my secret, Cherry, it's eucalyptus, and they will never harm you if you have it about you!" This sur-

prised me, even though I am accustomed to hearing queer things. Whilst so chatting I recalled to him the case of an Indian in Nairobi who tried to sell me a leopard he had as a pet, and began to prove how tame it was when suddenly it sprang on him, and seized him between the neck and shoulders ! I warned Delamot that within six months he would be caught by one of his pets, and I proved right, for it was well within that period when, one day on his return from a fortnight's stay in Dar-a-saalam, he went into the leopards' cage as usual, and was suddenly attacked by one of them. There is no doubt whatever that he would have been killed had not a friend been in the house, who, hearing his cries, seized his rifle, and shot the animal just in time. Delamot was very badly mauled, but eventually recovered.

After wandering around the mountain, seeing some of the haunts I knew so well during the war, I made my way to Arusha, reached to-day by a good road. Indeed, even the railway has now reached there as well.

In a few years' time Africa will be riddled with railways, I thought, and yet it is a vast country, and for a long, long time to come, their presence will be as unnoticed as a pin dropped in the ocean. Before I arrived at Arusha, I saw a big veld fire raging, and as my road led directly towards it, I did not relish the trip, but after proceeding half a mile farther, the fire suddenly swerved to the left, and I was able to go ahead. At Arusha there is a good hotel under the management of an old pioneer friend of mine, Ray Ulyate, who I think was the first man to bring bullock wagons with their teams from South Africa to Kenya. He was with Colonel Roosevelt's expedition in the Sotik country, which is not far from the Serengeti Plains, then unknown. I happened to be camped near the Escarpment, and Ulyate's father was felling timber for fuel for the railway engines, there being no coal in

Kenya, and an accident occurred in which Ulyate Senior had been killed. News of this reached Roosevelt's camp, so Ulyate started back to cross the Mau, and then down the Rift Valley to the Escarpment. In his own words, he told me, "I got to the Mau which is some thirty-five miles down the valley, and there met a big-game hunter who had just come from the railway. I anxiously enquired if he could give me any news of my father, and he merely said, 'Have you seen any lions about here?' In disgust, I walked off down the valley. Night came on, but I kept going at a good pace along the track until nearly midnight, when I heard lions not far away, and then nearer on both sides, drawing uncomfortably closer. The moon had risen, and, as you know, it is open ground, so that I could see fairly well. When I had gone about a mile farther, I realised the beasts were following close on me, and then a trial of nerves began, for they started to pace me on either side, barely twenty-five yards off, whilst those at the back endeavoured to force me to run, which, of course, would have been fatal. Being very anxious about my father, I set my mind on him, and this, luckily, helped me to keep my head. This ordeal lasted for two hours, which seemed like two years, and in the end, the lions, apparently lacking the pluck to attack, left me. When I arrived at the Escarpment and found my father was dead, I just collapsed!"

The country around Arusha is well worth exploring, and I thoroughly enjoyed a few days camping at the side of a beautiful lake near the town. A small war dance was especially performed for me by the Masai, or rather by an offshoot of that tribe, the members of which are very proud if one mistakes them for Masai. They behave exactly like the latter. Two of the warriors in this particular dance went mad just as the Masai do.

A man's curious behaviour when dancing is soon apparent, and it can be seen he is developing a strange form of hysteria. First, the muscles of his face begin to twitch, then those of his arms, and finally his whole body appears to be attacked or "possessed"; and then with one dreadful shiver, he will scream, or yell, and dash with his raised spear at the nearest object. The other dancing warriors are on the watch for his madness, and within a few seconds have the man down and disarmed; thereafter he goes off into a sort of stupor, and does not become normal again until he has slept. I have seen this happen several times, but more particularly when the natives are spearing a man-eating lion, and I must say it is not a pleasant experience. Turning to the lighter side of things, most natives are great wags, and love mimicry. Once I remember having two Masai spearmen with me, and one evening, when in camp, a week after the dance had been given, some of my Kikuyu porters were amusing themselves by giving an imitation of the Masai war dance. Instead of spears they used their sticks, and for shields they had bundles of large leaves tied together. During the dance, two were supposed to become hysterical and attack, and the others disarmed them. I had the greatest difficulty in keeping the peace, for my two Masai entirely failed to see the joke of this satire, and would have murdered the two actors had I not taken the situation in hand with all the firmness I could command.

No traveller should miss seeing the Ngorongoro Crater, because no other volcanic scene in Africa can compare with it, either for size, or for the number of animals it contains. It is certainly one of Africa's wonders, for it is thirty-five miles in circumference. This "Crater Zoo", for I can find no other words to describe it adequately, cannot be compared with anything elsewhere, with its

thousands of wild creatures, numbering, perhaps, from fifty to a hundred thousand strong according to the season, for at certain times many migrate across the Serengeti Plains to Lake Victoria. The Crater is 2,000 feet *below* the surrounding country, yet even so, the floor of the Crater is 6,000 feet *above* sea level. In some places its walls are sheer, at others they are gently sloping, and these slopes are forests, in which elephant, buffalo, and rhino make their homes. There are also vast numbers of zebra, wildebeest, gazelle, leopards, cheetahs, and even troops of lion.

Gazing into the vast interior, forests of acacia trees, their flat tops collectively resembling an English scene, stretch before you. The animals seem but mere specks, and it is only after one descends right into the Crater, that its vastness and the large number of its inhabitants become apparent. Within its 110 square miles are two streams of sparkling water, lakes, and bush round the edges of the slopes where many beasts may shelter.

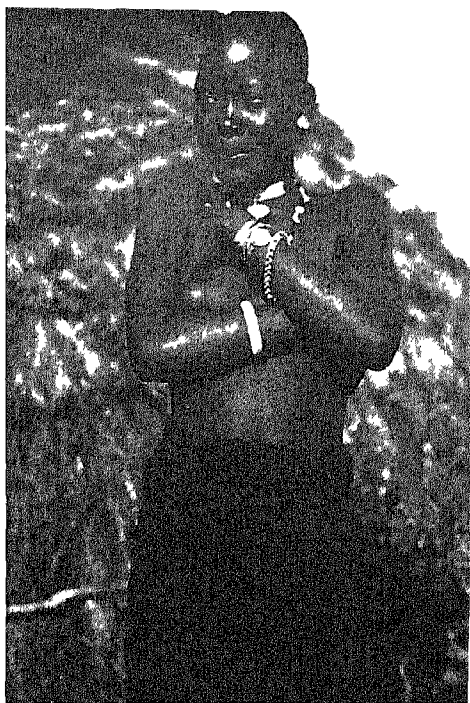
Even stranger still, hippo rise and sink in the placid waters of the lake. Countless monkeys, too, jump from tree to tree, whilst thousands of birds are seen beside the water and amongst the trees.

Sir Charles Ross, who visited this amazing crater, took a profound interest in it, and great credit is due to him for having been instrumental in arranging for it to become a permanent sanctuary. No greater monument could crown the life of a man who felt a fellowship with dumb creatures, and had learnt how Nature has designed her scenery to provide an harmonious setting in which they shall live. Man, too, may share the unending beauty of Nature if he enters her kingdom, not as an intruder, intent on transforming the perfect scene and marring it with the stamp of civilisation, but as an

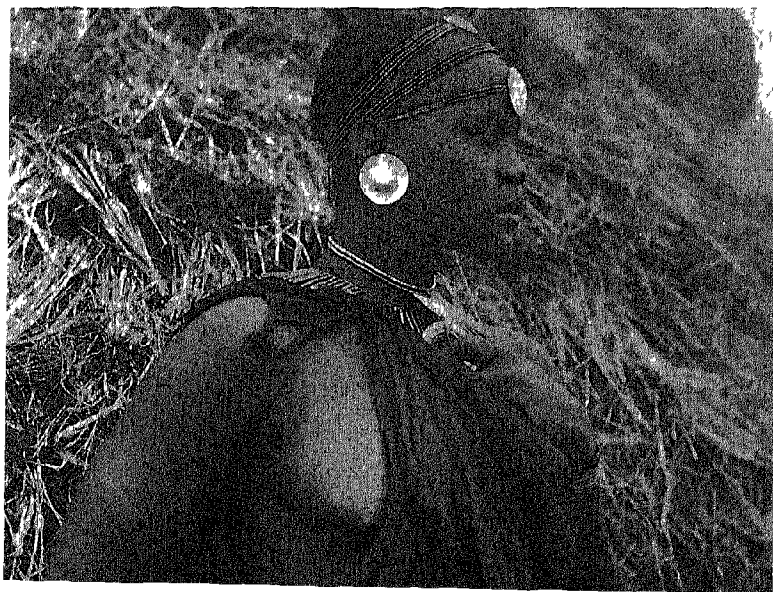
admirer, content to wander in her forests and over her mountains. Wordsworth's lines pay full tribute to this kingdom of simple yet entrancing beauty:

"The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion. The tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love."

Above.
A STUDY IN
GOYNESS



Below:
A NATIVE
BEAUTY





KIKUYU WARRIOR. THIS AMAZING
HEAD-DRESS IS MADE OF OSTRICH
FEATHERS



THIS OLD WAKAMBA WITCH
DOCTOR PLAYS UPON THE

CHAPTER IV

AFRICA'S TRIBES

“ Before Man made us citizens, great Nature made us men.”
LOWELL.

“ God made him, and therefore let him pass for a man.”
SHAKESPEARE.

AFRICA is so vast a continent that its size cannot possibly be gauged by looking at a map, and the only way to realise its immensity, and the wealth of interest within its ever-changing interior, is to travel through it as I have done, from East to West, and South to North. Just how very little is known about the real Africa is exemplified by the fact that many people believe all African natives to be alike both in appearance and in speech, whereas in fact one finds a totally different tribe speaking quite a different language every eighty miles or so. Consequently, a book on African travel, such as this, which contained no reference to the natives would be rather like a play without any characters ! Naturally, it is not possible to deal with more than a few of these tribes, but the varying characteristics of those I have selected will clearly show how Africa is made up of a truly extraordinary assortment of natives.

Now, it has been my good fortune to associate, at one time or another, with coloured races in nearly every part of the globe, and although I was unable, in many instances, to converse with them in their own language, our associations have always been characterised by a friendliness of which I am proud.

More than one African native has, without hesitation, placed his body between me and almost certain death,

and so my special regard for the sons of the dark continent will be fully appreciated. Many of them possess a highly developed sense of humour and they are indeed "Nature's children" in countless ways.

The tribes differ in appearance to a marked degree, whilst their languages are as distinct from one another as are those in Europe. In many of the coastal towns it is possible to hear over a dozen different native languages, as, for instance, in Mombasa, where the population is very mixed, though the Swahili men with their white gowns, and their women in black flowing garments, predominate.

In 1909, my first safari included representatives of the Kikuyu, Wakamba, Kavirondo, and several other tribes, acting as guards, cooks, camera-bearers, personal "boys", and porters. In accordance with Government regulations, each porter carried a load not exceeding sixty pounds, which he balanced on his head, and he marched from sixteen to twenty miles a day without showing any signs of distress. Pay ranged from nine to fifteen rupees a month, and the employer was responsible for their daily food supply, which consisted of one pound of mealie-meal (ground Indian corn) and the flesh of any game shot on the journey, there being only one meal a day—taken after camp had been pitched at the end of the day's march. Occasionally I camped near native villages, and the inhabitants always proved to be most friendly and hospitable. On making my first acquaintance with the Masai, I soon discovered that both in language and in customs they differed greatly from the tribes I had previously met. At that particular time, the Masai were not very far from Kiu, where I had gone after lion, as I had heard that my photographic chances would be good, Selous and other hunters having assured me that these animals had not yet developed that in-

instinctive fear which to-day causes the lion of the wilds to avoid the company of man.

Nowadays, it really seems as if the lions had realised the terrible power of fire-arms. My hunter friends had, of course, overlooked the rather important point that hunting with a rifle instead of a camera makes a vast difference, for the latter can be used only for a range of twenty-five yards or less, whereas the rifle, in the hands of a good shot, does its deadly work quite effectively at a hundred and fifty yards and upwards.

Two days after my arrival in Masai territory, my camp was visited by a famous chief of the tribe, accompanied by a number of his followers and wives, and I was presented with a sheep and two gourds of milk.

On the following day I returned the compliment, and found that the chief's kraal was only two miles from my camp. It was very large and surrounded by a "boma" or barricade, constructed of very thorny trees and bushes, many of the spikes being three inches long. The width of the "boma" at the base was between seven and eight feet, and so it provided an effective protection against lions. The enclosure could accommodate several hundred cattle, and, as an added precaution against nocturnal intruders, two large fires were kept burning throughout the night. The living huts were situated inside and close to the "boma", and were constructed of interlaced wattle branches, plastered with earth and cow-dung, the main entrance to the kraal, about six feet wide, being closed every night by large thorn bushes.

When I entered, a black-and-white mongrel dog approached me, and as it seemed to be frothing at the mouth, I regarded it with something more than suspicion. It walked slowly past me to a small ant-hill about a hundred yards away, and stretched itself on the ground. Almost immediately the chief and a number

of his men came to greet me, the former touching my rifle, and going through the movements of a man shooting, at the same time pointing towards the dog. I assumed these actions to mean that I should shoot the dog, and my personal "boy" confirmed my interpretation by saying, "Dog is bad, very bad, Bwana shoot!" At this moment the dog stood up, and so I killed it instantly. At my request, the poor animal was immediately buried. By the use of more signs, and the help of my boy, the chief and I held a short conversation. Swahili is the common language of Central Africa, but it is seldom understood by the Masai or Wakamba natives. By the way, many white people think that the black folk of Africa are not as clean as they might be and imagine that their persons must be unpleasantly pungent. Such people, however, are quite unaware that both to the natives and to the creatures of the wilds the "scent" of the white races is much more noticeable, for it must be remembered that the white man spends most of his life with his body enclosed by sweat-permeated garments, whereas natives, in their natural surroundings, have the greater part of their bodies exposed to light and fresh air every day and all day. From my own observation, I have come to the conclusion that rhino, for example, can scent a white man more easily than a native, so that when stalking game, the latter has less difficulty in approaching his intended victim. Without exception, all the porters employed on my expeditions availed themselves of every possible opportunity to bathe their bodies, frequently incurring serious risks when plunging into crocodile-infested pools and rivers. In my early days, I doubted the presence of gratitude in these natives, but I learnt that they are good companions, and most of them brave and loyal.

On the banks of the Tana River, my camp was visited

by a considerable number of native men, women, and children, who were on the verge of starvation owing to the failure of their crops, and my white companion, who was in charge of the porters and did the shooting, immediately set out on a hunting trip on behalf of the hungry people. Upon his return laden with meat, our guests did all they could to show their gratitude. Some months later, when my safari arrived at a village belonging to a different tribe, I gave my porters permission to drop their loads, and try to secure a supply of bananas and sugar-cane. During the preliminaries, one of the porters discovered his mother, whom he had not seen for many years, the two having drifted apart, with no possible means of communication. The mother was overjoyed, tears streaming down her wrinkled face as she gazed affectionately at her offspring, quite oblivious of the fact that two strange white men were witnessing the scene. When we departed from the village half an hour later, the mother accompanied us for several miles, marching through heavy rain, and occasionally relieving the son of his load, and all the while they chatted and laughed, the mother showing plainly that one of her most fervent prayers had been answered on that memorable day. When the time came for parting, she stood on a little ant-hill and waved a silent farewell to her son as we disappeared into the shadows of the forest.

The natives have a great desire to please the white man whenever possible, and this has often led to misunderstandings and to the erroneous impression that all blacks are liars. If, for example, a native is asked, "Are there a lot of animals in this district?" the reply would, as a rule, be truthful, and simply "Yes" or "No." If, however, one worded the question differently, and said, "There are no animals in this district, are there?" the reply would invariably be "No, Bwana, no." This

acquiescence on the part of natives reminds me of an Arab who acted as a guide during one of my expeditions into the Sahara Desert. He had been engaged on my behalf by another Arab who spoke some English, and on his arrival he handed over some documents, but as I was very busy, I merely asked him one question, "Can you speak English?" He replied readily, "Yes!" However, long before the end of the second day I came to the conclusion he had deceived me, and, in disgust, I said to him, "You're an awful liar!" to which he also replied "Yes!" It was about the only English word he knew. Nevertheless, he proved quite efficient as a guide, which, in the Sahara, is of far greater importance than linguistic ability.

Natives are invariably cheerful and optimistic, and they sing, joke, gossip and laugh for hours on end, even while carrying their heavy loads over atrocious paths or in hilly country. The casual observer might be inclined to think they have no sentiment, but actually they have, though they are able to hide their feelings more effectively than Europeans. There is no doubt that the main thoughts of a native mother are always for the welfare of her offspring, and more than one of my camera-bearers and personal boys, most being adult men and some in the prime of life, have wept when the time for our parting arrived. Another characteristic common to all African tribes is an intense love of dancing and rhythmic movement, and although the choice of recreations is rather limited for the women, they participate with the males in many of the festive dances. The men also enjoy hunting, wrestling, a form of draughts played with stones or shells, and, of course, story telling, for natives are both good talkers and good listeners, whilst a limited number of them, who have come under the missionary influence, speak English and sometimes can read and write.

Their supply of stories, whether funny or thrilling, is necessarily limited, and the man who can concoct a new tale is regarded as somewhat of a hero. It naturally follows that in their villages the same man will tell the same story over and over again, and if it happens to be humorous, the same audience will always applaud, and laugh with the same heartiness !

Dances never change, there being no composers to create new song and dance hits or to vary the music. A native dance is, therefore, a test of endurance, both for dancers and for audience, the latter, especially the older men, invariably enjoying the stimulating effects of liquid refreshments during performances.

Many years ago I used to chat with the Chief of the Wakamba, who had led his tribe to countless battles. He was a very old man, and yet he was full of vigour, and his memory was quite unimpaired. For generations, the Wakamba occupied the mountainous country between Donyo Sabuk and Kilimanjaro, and throughout that time they were the deadly enemies of the Masai Tribe, which, at one time, was composed of the most feared warriors in East Africa. The Masai, however, carrying heavy shields and long spears, were not as fleet and agile as the expert Wakamba bowmen, who were armed with powerful bows and had quivers full of deadly poisoned arrows. There is no doubt that the Masai Tribe, driven from many of the hilly locations it once occupied, has now been forced to live on the open plains where surprise attacks are less possible. In a hand-to-hand contest, the Masai are invincible, relying on thrusting and stabbing with their spears, whereas the Wakamba warriors inflicted enormous losses, with hardly any damage to themselves, by firing their arrows down a hill-side* or from some form of cover.

The Wakamba belong to the Bantu race, the men being

of good physique and tall, with features that are by no means negroid, the forehead being high, and the nose prominent. They vary in colour from jet black to olive brown; and from an early age the women carry loads and perform heavy work, and they are much stronger and more robust than the men, but not so tall.

Both sexes remove, with the aid of tweezers, all hair from their bodies, including eyebrows and eyelashes, except on their heads, where the hair is arranged after a pattern. Most of them shave their heads completely, save for one tuft on the crown which is left for "seed", so that the hair will grow over the head again. Sometimes hairdressing fashions change, and maybe a star pattern will become more popular on men's heads than a crescent. For full dress, the natives insert ostrich or cock feathers in these shaped tufts of hair.

The boys, before circumcision, file all their front teeth to a point, the men contending that if their teeth are not filed, the women will not marry them, whilst the women maintain that their teeth are sharpened to enable them to bite their husbands! It has been stated that any native who files his teeth to a point is a cannibal, but clear evidence has satisfied me that the Wakamba abhor the eating of human flesh. I believe, therefore, that as many African tribes mutilate their teeth in some way or other, the Wakamba custom has most probably survived from the days of internecine tribal warfare which made it necessary to do this in order to be able to distinguish friend from foe. The filing of the Wakambas' front teeth affects the pronunciation of words, with the result that a child speaks more distinctly than an adult. Until recent years, the men wore no clothes, preferring to daub their naked bodies with oil and red clay, and decorating themselves with iron chains, copper bracelets, and other ornaments, including, of course, amulets, obtained from

the witch-doctor, and hung round the neck as charms against sudden death, disease, attacks from foes, or dangers from wild animals.

All weapons and ornaments of iron are made by the native armourers, who obtain the iron ore from the river beds by washing the black sand and extracting from it almost pure particles of iron. This is mixed with charcoal and heated for several hours in an earthen furnace, until the molten metal falls to the bottom and can be collected.

The forge consists of a pair of goat- or sheep-skin bellows, and when the iron is white hot, it is lifted from the furnace by a pair of rough pliers and beaten on a stone anvil into swords, knives, arrow-heads, and ornaments. The women and girls are fond of thick brass and copper armlets as well as of chains and bead ornaments. In some respects these natives seem to be ahead of civilised peoples; for they apply the principle of "hire purchase" to matrimony, the girls being bartered for cattle and goats, and the book-keeping being done by a system of tally-sticks, made of hard wood, about six inches long, and an inch in diameter, on which notches are cut, representing cows, goats, or sheep. The wood is split through the middle of the notches, and the tally is held by the girl's father, whilst the counter tally is kept by the purchaser.

The sexes meet at dances held in the open, often on moonlight nights, and, as in civilised countries, continuing until the early hours of the morning. Of all the symbolic dances the "Betrothal" is the most interesting, being heralded by the beating of drums from many localities, groups of twenty, thirty, or more, arriving from various parts. The girls are adorned with quantities of beads, brass and copper wire, whilst the youths are smothered with feathers and bangles. The men form in a row, and the girls take up places opposite them, facing whom-

soever they choose. In the meantime, the drummers, having tuned up their drums at a fire, commence to dance and sing between the rows, whilst the dancers begin shrugging their shoulders, working their elbows to and fro, and stamping rhythmically to the music. When thoroughly worked up, they shake their limbs and bodies, and as the drummers pass out from between the rows, they advance to each other, rub checks, and withdraw again. Then the drummers return, and the whole routine begins again. The young men may change places if they are not satisfied with the partners facing them, and if the parents of the youths agree with the selections their sons have made, and think it is time they settled down, they permit them to brew gourds of native beer called "ohe", which they take to the girls' fathers. Then, if the latter are favourably impressed, the elderly male relatives are called together, and providing no objections are raised, the youths are welcomed, and everybody toasts everybody else with "ohe" until they find it easier to sit than stand !

A father always accompanies his son in order to strike a bargain, for if the girl is strong, healthy, well covered and likely to make a good mother, a large price is demanded, but if she is small and slim, her parents ask only a moderate price. A girl's parents have to reckon the number of goats and sheep required to recompense them for all their outlay on their daughter since the day she was born up to the present date, and they probably add that she is capable of bearing at least six children, for which additional cows are demanded. In this way the bargain may ultimately be fixed at, say, five cows and twenty goats and sheep, and then the dates of payment are arranged.

The Wakamba natives name their children according to events connected with their birth. For instance,

"Mbiti", meaning hyena, indicates the child was born when the hyena was heard, or "Kilonso", meaning noise, that the child cried at birth.

The Wakamba tribe is very superstitious, believing in spirits, and having a dread of sorcery to such an extent that they refuse to touch such trees as the baobab, maintaining they are haunted by an evil spirit, and they would rather die than cut down a "keatene" tree, which bears a loofa-like fruit used for making beer.

Besides witch-doctors and smiths, whose powers descend from father to son, the Wakamba have a fraternity known as the "rain-doctors", who claim command of dry and rainy weather, and declare that by holding up a charm, or uttering certain incantations, they are able to keep rain off a certain spot when it is falling all around it, and when rain is overdue, a rush is made to these doctors who will accept nothing less than a goat or a sheep from each client. The doctor usually keeps his weather-eye open, and when a small cloud appears over the horizon, he dons his full-dress costume, including a special "rain-drum" which he beats as he skips, dances, shouts, sings and chants, until he has worked himself into a state of hysteria. Often the rain does arrive, and everyone is delighted.

The Wakamba excel all other tribes in East Africa in hunting, shooting, and tracking down wild animals, their ears being extremely sensitive and their sight exceptionally keen. A hunter will lie concealed by earth, grass, or branches of trees near a water-hole, and wait patiently until the animals come to drink, when a well-directed arrow will find its mark. If the poisoned arrow touches an artery, the animal will run only a few yards before falling to the ground, but otherwise it may cover some distance before it finally collapses. The barbed arrows used are smeared with poison obtained from the

bark of the "kivai" tree, which is cut into small pieces and boiled until it has the consistency of wax. In order to keep the poison fresh and to prevent accidental poisoning, arrow-heads are covered with pieces of goat-skin, which are removed only when the arrows are to be used. Fire is produced by drilling a hard stick into a small hole on a flat oblong section of soft wood, the stick being twirled rapidly between the open palms, dried grass being placed at the point of contact; then in a few minutes smoke appears, and the grass, when fanned, bursts into flames.

On one occasion I asked the old Chief how fire was *first* obtained, and between intermittent pinches of snuff, he explained how folk-lore is handed down from generation to generation, one of the legends describing how fire was first created. He said, "The first man had no fire, and later the people on the earth increased and they had a chief. One day the chief went out walking, and saw a rhino polishing his horn on a stone. As the rhino walked past he saw something shining on the tip of his horn, and so he took a present of a sheep and a goat to the wizard, who told him that it was 'fire' and could only be obtained by making the rhino laugh, on which the flame would drop from his horn. The chief called his people together and promised his daughter in marriage to anyone who made the rhino laugh. Muzemi, the son of the smith of the tribe, who had studied animals, decided he would win the prize. So he visited the elephant and told him that the hippo said he was much stronger in water than the elephant on land. Visiting the hippo, he told him that the elephant claimed to be much stronger on land than the hippo in water. Then he arranged a competition for the following day, when the chief and his men and all the animals, including the rhino, were to decide which was the stronger. At the

appointed time Muzemi tied a rope to the tail of the elephant and instructed him that when he said 'pull', the elephant must pull a log out of the river. He then went into the water and tied the other end of the rope to the tail of the hippo, and told him that when he said 'pull', he must pull a log down from the bank. The competition started. The elephant pulled the hippo out of the water, but as he dragged him up the steep bank, both the elephant's tail and the hippo's broke off. At the ludicrous sight of the elephant and hippo without tails, the rhino laughed, and so he dropped the fire which Muzemi seized. The elephant was very angry, so all the people ran away, and from that day to this the animals are no longer friendly to man. The elephant and the hippo also were very angry with the rhino and so the wizard caused the rhino's tail to shrink up until it was only a stump, so that he could no longer afford to make fun of the elephant and the hippo. That is the reason why these three big animals do not have tails like other animals."

This was one of the many legends he recounted to me, which he said were the property of the tribe. Many were about animals, and contained much wit and humour, and a deep sympathy with Nature; and they all expressed the primitive notions of right and wrong, usually the wicked being punished and the good rewarded.

The Masai are Neolithic in origin, and now occupy large plains in the south of Kenya and the north of Tanganyika. They were the age-long enemies of the Bantu races living around them, such as the Wakamba who occupied the hilly country overlooking the plains, and the Kikuyus who dwelt in the thick forest from fear of the Masai warriors, who used to raid them and carry off their grain and livestock. Every Masai has a herd of cattle, and when the weather is hot and the grass burnt and

dried up, they leave the open plains and trek to the rivers and lakes, where they find water and green pastures.

They are semi-nomads, and the only tribe in this area possessing donkeys, which they use solely for transporting their belongings from one place to another. In addition to their cattle, donkeys and large herds of goats and sheep, they also keep dogs; but they scorn poultry, the flesh of which they consider is only suitable for inferior tribes. Furthermore, it is beneath their dignity to cultivate or take anything from the soil, and they despise the natives who do so. A Masai who has lost all his cattle becomes a "Dorobo", and of these there are two classes—those who live by hunting, and those who are smiths. The latter exchange their ironware with the Masai for cattle, and with other tribes for grain, whilst those who hunt find a ready market for buffalo hides, ostrich feathers, ivory, and the horns of animals they kill. Thus they gradually regain a herd of cattle, and are reinstated as Masai. Their social system divides the males into three groups, boys (Emurata), warriors (El-Moran), and married men (El-Moruak), the latter becoming elders as soon as they leave the Moran stage. The old men are very fond of honey-beer, and they have a veneration for the honey-bird, which guides them to the bee's nest. They also chew tobacco and take snuff, but they do not cultivate the tobacco plant, and so have to purchase their requirements.

The witch-doctors are highly skilled in divination, enchantments, and prophecy, and also in discovering drugs and medicines. By unanimous consent they choose one of their number to be the Chief Witch-Doctor, who exerts spiritual power over the tribe. A distinguishing feature of the Masai is the extraction of the two middle teeth of the lower jaw, which some people say is done to enable a sick person to be fed through the opening

when the teeth are clenched as in lock-jaw, whilst others contend the gap is necessary in order to spit a great distance ! When greeting one another, or striking a bargain, they spit on their palms before shaking hands, as a sign of respect and friendship, and to wipe off the saliva is supposed to be a great insult ! Most probably, however, the mutilation of their teeth enabled warriors to distinguish friend from foe, as in the case of the Wakamba's filed molars. All Masai from tender years pierce the lobes of their ears with pieces of wood, and they gradually increase the size of these until the lobes actually hang down on to their shoulders. Fine chains are then inserted as ornaments, which rest on the chest. Regarding their physique, both sexes are tall and stately, and a Masai youth at eighteen is usually of medium height with lithe limbs and wiry muscles and walks with a fine natural grace. The Masai women are never as stout as those of other tribes who live principally on cereals and carry heavy loads, the least honourable of their tasks being to drive or herd the pack-donkeys. But they build the huts very cleverly out of thin wattles, hides and cow-dung. The huts are built in groups adjoining each other, are about five or six feet high, and are placed inside the thorn enclosure in which the cattle are kept at night for protection against marauding lions.

Once in every seven years, the youth of the Masai assemble for the circumcision rite—hundreds of boys about seventeen years of age arriving with their male relations, who bring cattle, sheep, goats, and honey-beer to the chief witch-doctor, who is assisted by other members of his fraternity. The boys paint their bodies, but are not allowed to carry weapons. After circumcision, their heads are shaved, and they wear special garb. After that the youths are isolated for about a year while their hair grows again, and then it is length-

ened with strips of fibre, stiffened with clay and sheep's fat, and plaited into a long pig-tail. When they become warriors, their dress consists of a leather cape thrown over the shoulders and a leather thong around the waist from which a knife or knobkerrie is suspended. Each warrior carries a spear when away from home, but for active service he has a special spear eight feet in length, a buffalo hide shield, and a short sword. An elaborate head-dress of ostrich feathers, or, if the warrior has distinguished himself in combat with the lion, a mane, is worn, which is made into a kind of pointed busby, and gives the wearer a distinguished appearance. A man remains in the warrior class for several years, and during that time is not permitted to marry, indulge in intoxicants or even to mix with married people. Despite all the rigid laws, however, they practise certain customs which reveal both a low standard of morality and a possible reason why their numbers are gradually diminishing. The price of a wife depends upon the wealth of the parents of the bride and bridegroom, the daughter of a poor family being purchasable for three cows and two bullocks, whereas if her parents are wealthy, the price would be considerably more.

Both the women and girls encase their arms and legs in very thick coils of wire that look like dozens of bracelets and anklets, but after marriage a woman must show her changed status by also wearing massive coils of copper and iron wire around her neck and dangling from her ears.

Another distinguishing feature is that the married women wrap themselves in leather garments extending from shoulders to feet, whereas the young girls are covered from their hips downwards only.

The wives greatly desire children, and slaughter an ox to celebrate a birth—a ceremony to which men are not

admitted, and barren women chant daily prayers to "Engai", the Good Spirit, for the gift of a child, and sacrifice sheep to him for this purpose. All Masai believe in "Engai", a God associated with cows, rain, and grass, who has always been friendly to mankind. They also believe in an Evil Spirit, "Sac-Kidongoi", who is responsible for death, destruction, and disease. Once a year members of the tribe meet under a large tree where an ox is killed, and its blood spilt on the ground. The meat is then eaten in respectful silence, for they say the cow was given to them by Engai, and is the greatest gift of all, for it is only from the cow that they obtain food and wealth, and without it they could neither marry nor bear children. The gifts from Engai, in order of importance, are cows, rain, grass, and women.

The Masai boys are taught never to kill vultures because these serve as scavengers, but lion, leopard, and any other animal that attempts to attack cattle must be slain. The Masai, like many other tribes, leave their dead to be eaten by hyenas, but the Chief and the principal Witch-Doctor both have a ceremonial burial, and thereafter every Masai who passes one of the graves must throw a stone on the heap surmounting it to commemorate the honoured dead. I know of three such heaps of stones, one being by the side of the road leading down into the Rift Valley, which often puzzles strangers.

The Buganda—natives of Uganda—are a bright, intelligent, and industrious race, who have undoubtedly profited by Mission training and education; and they are totally different from some of the tribes I encountered when I entered the Congo region.

The first savage tribe I met there was the Bahema—ex-cannibals in a primitive state, wearing no covering of any description except a tiny apron. All their ornaments, knives, belts, and weapons are made by them-

selves; they have no gaudy calico print, or fanciful glass beads, but iron and copper, forged with great skill, and worn on arms, neck or ankles. The women carry a peculiarly-shaped knife, rather like a trowel, which is thrust between the flesh and the thin cord of hide around their waists. They use large clay cooking pots, also hand-made, and live in wattle-and-mud huts. These people are indeed a fine race of magnificently built savages, but the thing that interested me most was how the men maintained their fine physique in view of the fact that the women did all the work.

Different again are the Walese, who are widely spread, and divided and subdivided into many tribes that have little to do with each other, although they all come from the same parent stock. These people are extremely war-like and truculent, and when I was in Irumu, the authorities told me the tribe was quite out of hand, and that a war might be expected at any time. From first-hand experience, I came to the conclusion that they are about the worst lot of natives to be met with in the Congo, and, moreover, they are still cannibals.

Next to this tribe were the Babira, who were also war-like, but employed much more of their time in tilling the soil.

In contrast is the M'buti, or Pigmy tribe—a well-built little people carrying bows and arrows, and sometimes armed with a neatly-fashioned throwing spear with a narrow-bladed head. The women are also well built, and both sexes anoint their bodies with a mixture of palm oil and a red pigment, composed of clay and the bark of a tree. They live far off the beaten track, and as soon as they see anybody, they dive into the darkness of the forest.

Then there are the Mongwana and the Manyuema tribes, both being averse to work. Almost without ex-

ception, they are Mohammedan, and at one time were the slave-raiders and ivory-stealers who, under the Arab traders' influence and the régime of Tippu-Tib, wrought havoc and destruction amongst the Central African tribes for nearly a quarter of a century. I remember passing through one of their villages and hearing a lot of noise which I discovered emanated from one of their dances which was in full swing. It was entirely different from any other native dance I had ever seen, and was taken part in mostly by women dressed in grass skirts, who appeared to be in a state of wild frenzy—stamping, whirling about, and bumping into each other, and yet, somehow managing to keep in time with the rhythm of the tom-toms. The dance had been going on for fourteen hours, and I was informed it would probably last for several days! Even whilst I was watching, two of the women collapsed, but after water had been thrown over them under the shade of a hut, they actually staggered back and commenced to dance again. I had never before seen pleasure that was such hard work.

During my various African expeditions close contact with my personal "boys" has afforded me exceptional opportunities of forming an opinion of their mental and physical abilities. One of them possessed an outstanding character, being a fifteen-year-old Somali, who had a fairly good English vocabulary, and was obedient and most conscientious. He was always delighted to describe in English the somewhat hectic adventures of the "Mad Mullah", or, as he described him, the "Mad Muddler". But undoubtedly the "peer" of all the personal boys I employed was Ernesti, a Buganda boy, who more than lived up to the excellent references he produced at the time of his engagement. He had received a splendid training at the hands of the Missionaries, and could speak and write in the English

language, and converse fluently in several native dialects. I attribute his philosophical outlook and his unusual phrasing when speaking English to his Mission training, to his fondness for studying the Bible, and to the fact that, though expressing his thoughts in English, he was always thinking as a *native*.

Prior to entering my service, Ernesti had accompanied on a trip a white hunter who was unfortunately stricken with black-water fever. He refused to allow Ernesti to send for a doctor, but when he became delirious, Ernesti despatched a messenger with an urgent appeal for help, although before aid arrived, the hunter died. And so Ernesti collected his late employer's belongings together, wrapped the body in blankets, and set out for the white settlement. On the following day, the Doctor who had been summoned met the natives with their unusual load, and after satisfying himself as to the cause of the hunter's death, committed the body to a jungle grave. In recognition of Ernesti's honesty and faithful service, the Government presented him with a bicycle, an article highly prized by the native. Ernesti joined me on my expedition at Nairobi in 1913, and we travelled to the borders of Abyssinia, and afterwards crossed Africa, passing through cannibal country to the mouth of the Congo. I had intended to return to England alone, but when Ernesti expressed doubts of his ability to return to Nairobi by himself, for it meant a lone trip through cannibal country, I decided to take him with me on my ocean journey. He was delighted, and in due course we arrived in London, just prior to the outbreak of the Great War in 1914. Following a short war experience in Belgium, I met Colonel Driscoll, to whom had been entrusted the task of selecting men from the Legion of Frontiersmen for the formation of a Battalion destined for service in East Africa, which was named the 25th

Royal Fusiliers. The celebrated African big-game hunters, Selous and Outram, both joined the ranks, just as I did, and Ernesti accompanied me on the voyage, acting as teacher of the Swahili language to the troops, who quickly grasped the use and meaning of the simpler terms. All ranks were soon impressed by Ernesti's capabilities, and I agreed to his being "borrowed" by the Colonel. Selous, Outram and I had by now been commissioned as first lieutenants, and we decided to invite all the safari gun-bearers in Nairobi, some of whom had served us in pre-war days, to join our ranks. We were confident that their keener sight and knowledge of the country would be of inestimable value to the members of the Battalion who were not acquainted with local conditions. Ernesti's imagination was fired, and he became a soldier too, and a few weeks later our men were advancing in open order over ground which was covered with large and small patches of thorn bush. Ernesti sighted a mother rhino with a young one standing under a tree some forty yards away, and he quietly called to the man nearest to him, "Kafaru", but the man took no notice. Then Ernesti realised he did not understand Swahili, and so called out, "Rhino", but it was too late, for the animal had got their wind, and was charging full speed down on them. They both fled along a bush pathway, and were fast being overtaken when Ernesti succeeded in pushing his comrade into a small opening at the track-side, and in trying to locate a similar safety-zone for himself, Ernesti fell. In its wild rush the rhino passed over him, but as one hind-foot was rising from the ground it struck Ernesti's shoulder, breaking several bones. As a result, he spent some weeks in hospital. Meanwhile, I had been loaned to the R.N.A.S. to serve under Commander Cull, who was responsible for bombing the German raider "Koenigsberg" in the Rufiji River.

As soon as he recovered, Ernesti was again attached to the Colonel, who greatly valued his services. Ultimately, when peace was declared, he became manager of a coffee estate.

Throughout the following pages Ernesti will appear, uttering his quaint philosophies, and I am sure the reader will become as attached to him as I was, for he combined all the qualities most needed on long expeditions into unknown territory, and proved the loyalty, the wisdom and the selflessness of the African native.

Ernesti was a devout lover of Nature, and indicated by his frequent remarks that he viewed with dismay the often wanton destruction of plant and animal life by white man and native alike. He undoubtedly held in high esteem the attainments of the whites, but he was instinctively opposed to any form of vandalism. On one occasion he expressed himself at some length on the subject, and as his words were memorised at the time, I will shortly quote them verbatim so as to enable the reader to follow his reasoning more easily.

It happened that Ernesti and I visited a road-makers' camp, composed of about five hundred natives, under the direction of a white overseer and a white assistant. Up-to-date equipment was employed, including explosives, and large trees were being felled or blasted from their roots with speed and efficiency, and although Ernesti conversed in his usual quiet manner with several of the native workers, I could feel he was undergoing a great deal of mental stress.

We returned to camp for lunch, and afterwards I decided to overhaul my camera, as it had been subjected to hard usage during the previous week. My rifle and revolver were also in need of cleaning and oiling, and so I entrusted their overhaul to Ernesti. He squatted near me as he worked, and on completion of the task

remarked: "Bwana has chosen well, for the machine he tends has eyes which are kind; they speak not of things which have been destroyed, but only of those things which it is good to see. Bwana's machine will make all these pleasant things live and speak to those who look into his books. These (holding up the rifle and revolver) know and speak but one word, 'Death', and the things to which they speak are destroyed. You and I, Bwana, are pleased that we have eyes, but they are not always kind. They speak often to the mind of that which is not good, of suffering and destruction. Yes, Bwana, they have made my heart heavy, for the feet of the white man follow the broad path which is Destruction. He has no wish to follow another path which may speak to him of creation; for, Bwana, Nature creates and man destroys. It is well that Nature works more quickly than man. If a white man wishes to build a wooden house, he destroys many trees and uses but little of them. The white man has many clothes, and blankets, but if he requires a new coat, he must rob many sheep of their coats to make it. Bwana, the white man makes small things out of much material, but Nature travels another path; she makes large things out of things which are small." Removing a tiny gourd from a necklace he was wearing, he extracted a small seed, placed it carefully on my camp table, and continued, "Bwana, if I give this seed to the wisest of white men, he and his magic machines can do nothing with it. But Nature is wiser and she has good servants. Therefore, Bwana, when I give this little seed to Nature, she will cause it to become a large tree, which is good. Her servants, the soil, the sun and the rain, never sleep. The soil works always in the same place, but the sun and the rain have much work to do in many lands; therefore, Bwana, they are not always with us. Before the white man came, the people of my land wore

but little clothing, and their homes were simple. Therefore, Bwana, they had no cause to destroy so many of the things which Nature had created. But my people are learning to wear clothes like the white man, and to build houses like those of the white man, so, Bwana, they learn, at the same time, to destroy. My father saw all these things and said, 'There will be a day when man with his magic machines will destroy more quickly than Nature can create, then will Nature take revenge.' But, Bwana, it is not *all* quite so, for Nature is kind and seeks not revenge, but she and her servants, the soil, the sun, and the rain, will be very tired, and they will welcome sleep."

Read these strange, though simple words again, and it will be found that they provide a commentary on conditions to-day, just as they applied to the world when Ernesti uttered them; and that is because he spoke only of fundamentals—of the ageless conflict between good and evil, kindness and intolerance, wisdom and ignorance. In a warring world, where mighty nations plunge into indescribable destruction and then slowly emerge to prepare for further conflict, Nature and those close to her, like Ernesti, are refreshing to listen to. In this connection, recent world happenings have set my mind thinking about the truth in that old saying, "History repeats itself", and I find myself recalling my experiences of the Zulu tribe. It is true they are in the South and right off our present itinerary, but I nevertheless feel that their history offers such striking parallels to present-day events that I must refer to them whilst writing of other African tribes.

It has often been said there is nothing new in this world, something similar having always appeared some time previously in history. That is true, and the battling nations to-day seeking territorial and commercial domination, are behaving just as the Zulu nation did, when it was dreaming of land domination.

At one time the most powerful tribe in South-Eastern Africa was the Amaxosa, a division of the Southern Bantu family, a war-like people who succeeded in driving the bushmen and Hottentots from the Transvaal and Natal. A relatively weak subject tribe, known as the "Tobacco Sellers", was ruled by a chief named Jobe, who was a lover of peace; but his two sons decided the time had arrived for the Tobacco Sellers to throw off the yoke. As the Chief remained deaf to their entreaties, the sons plotted to murder him, but unfortunately for them, Jobe became aware of their plans, and during the night the hut occupied by the two sons was surrounded by Jobe's bodyguard. When called upon to surrender, the two sons made a dash for freedom, one being stabbed to death. The second managed to escape with a spear thrust in the back. Notwithstanding the severity of the wound, he made his way to Cape Town, where he entered the employ of the early white traders. He served his masters well; and he took a great interest in the drilling of the troops stationed at Cape Town. It became clear to him that a well-disciplined and trained army would always be successful against an undisciplined and untrained array of warriors.

At the end of two years, news having filtered through of the death of Jobe, the son decided to return to his native land and claim the chieftainship. He set out on the journey, taking with him two horses, and a few months later, his fellow-countrymen showed great interest in the reports they received that a native who claimed the right to rule the Tribe was approaching, and that he had with him two strange animals, on one of which he rode. The natives who dwelt inland had not, at that time, had an opportunity of seeing horses, and the idea of a large creature ridden by a human being seemed to them a sure sign that he must be possessed of unusual powers.

On the traveller's arrival, he lost no time in making his claims known, and the scar on his back was eventually regarded as clear evidence of his right to succeed Jobe. Owing to his experience, he was given the title of Dingiswayo, meaning "The Wanderer". This was at the close of the 18th century.

The new Chief promptly divided his warriors into different regiments, each being distinguishable by the colour and design of its shield. The fighting equipment for each warrior was a throwing spear (Umkonto), a short stabbing spear, and a knobkerrie, and for defence a large shield.

In addition to the distinguishing shields, members of the various regiments wore different forms of head-dress, some of white, others of black, feathers. Needless to say, it required a short space of time for Dingiswayo to prove to his own satisfaction and to the consternation of neighbouring tribes that his bid for power had been successful; and the erstwhile Tobacco Sellers adopted the name Izulu, meaning "The Heavens".

Within a few years, the only nation capable of offering appreciable opposition to the Zulus was the Swazis, who were doughty fighters; and at frequent intervals an army was sent to invade Swaziland, for the purpose of overcoming local opposition and obtaining booty in the form of cattle, goats, etc. During one of these forays, the Swazi chief was taken prisoner, and, strange though it may seem, Dingiswayo treated him hospitably, and soon released him, mainly no doubt in the hope that further battles with the Swazis would be possible in the near future.

The unexpected sometimes happens, however, and, when leading a rather limited force, Dingiswayo was taken prisoner by the Swazi chief and put to death.

Chaka then became King of the Zulus (1800-1828)

and possessed even more than Dingiswayo's thirst for power and martial efficiency. In view of the ease with which the Zulus had overrun the surrounding countryside, and in order to ensure the bravery of his warriors, Chaka debarred them from carrying the throwing spear, insisting that their arms should consist of the knobkerrie and stabbing assegai only. Any warrior who returned from battle without the weapon of an enemy or minus his own weapon was immediately put to death, and history records that whole regiments were sometimes killed for having suffered defeat by an enemy.

Although friction occasionally occurred between the Boers and Zulus, with a certain amount of bloodshed, open and extended hostilities never resulted.

At the height of his power Chaka was murdered at the instigation of Dingaan, and, according to tradition, Chaka is stated to have said to Dingaan and the chiefs who stood by as his life-blood ebbed away, "You will rule the land when I am gone, but I see the white man coming, and he will be your master."

Apart from the strict discipline he enforced on his warriors, Chaka also decreed that all children born either deformed or unhealthy should be destroyed; all warriors wounded in battle to such an extent as to incapacitate them for further service in the army were also put to death; natives, both male and female, when they had reached such an age as to be physically unsuitable for labour or fighting, were also killed; and the same penalty was imposed for crimes of immorality and dishonesty, or, in fact, for breach of any of the King's laws.

Chaka insisted that no warrior should marry until he had proved his worth in battle and efficiency in warfare, and upon his success in these directions depended the number of wives he was allowed to possess. Wives were, of course, secured by means of "lobolo," that is, the man

had to hand over so many cattle or goats to the bride's father. At a later stage, owing to encroachment by white settlers, Zulus found it difficult to secure sufficient cattle for wife-purchase by the old methods, and were compelled to seek employment in the towns. For years it was common practice for a native to work in a town for six months or so until he had obtained sufficient money, and then retire to the kraal, purchase his wife or additional wife, and then spend his time in hunting or in other manly pursuits until he again became a victim of Cupid's dart.

Shortly after Chaka's death, Dingaan (1834-1838) decided to open hostilities against the Boers, and farmers in outlying districts were done to death. In the hope of preserving peace the Boer leaders sent a deputation to Dingaan, and a number of the famous Voor-trekers were chosen to carry out the mission. They were received in state by Dingaan, and invited into the kraal. Though they entertained no little suspicion, the Boers agreed to Dingaan's stipulation that arms were not to be brought inside the kraal, and the Boer muskets, pistols and swords were therefore discarded before entering the enclosure. After a lively speech in Zulu by Dingaan, the warriors, who surrounded the throne and the visitors, commenced a war dance. Then hearing an order from Dingaan, "Kill the wizards", they fell on the Boers without hesitation, and the majority of the whites were killed within a few minutes. A few survivors were later taken to the Hill of Mimosa, where they were clubbed to death. The final acts of the tragedy were witnessed by a missionary from his hut door. The news of the massacre soon reached the Boer leaders, and a commando was immediately organised for war.

The Zulu army set out to meet the invaders, and the battle occurred on the shores of a river, afterwards to

be known as the Blood River. The Boers were skilled fighters, and, although outnumbered by at least twenty to one, inflicted heavy losses on the natives. Prior to the attack, all the wagons of the commando were arranged in a circle, the spaces between the spokes of the wheels and between the wheels themselves being heavily covered in with the thorny branches of mimosa tree.

The women and children accompanying the commando were organised so that while some were occupied in loading the muskets, others, armed with hatchets, cutlasses or swords, patrolled the inner circle of the wagons, so as to deal with any warrior who managed to gain access.

The battle did not last long, as the Zulus with spears and knobkerries only were unable to make headway against the well-entrenched sharp-shooters with fire-arms. Thousands of native warriors fell during the fight, and the river is said to have run red with blood for several days; and hence the name Blood River. This battle, to all intents and purposes, ended Dingaan's power, and *Dingaan's Day is now commemorated throughout the Union of South Africa as a public holiday.*

Later, when Cetewayo (1856-1879) ascended the throne, he was animated by a desire to exert the influence which Dingiswayo, Chaka and Dingaan had exercised during their reigns; and this led to the Zulu War in which British troops and native levies fought against the Zulu Army.

The British received a terrible setback at the battle of Isandhlwawa, meaning the "Little Hand"; 1,300 white troops and 400 native levies were wiped out almost to a man, the only survivors being Lieutenants Coghill and Melville, who escaped with Union Jacks wrapped round their bodies, although severely wounded. The cause of the disaster was the fact that the officer in com-

mand was unskilled in native methods of fighting, and no attempt had been made to form a laager, *i.e.* no barricade of rocks or vehicles had been erected, and the Zulus, numbering over 20,000, attacked in mass formation. The cannon bored huge gaps in their ranks, which were immediately filled, and eventually the British gunners were speared at their posts.

Soon after this unfortunate blow to British prestige, the general commanding the main body of troops decided to choose a battlefield more suited to his idea and selected the Plains of Ulundi (1879). When the flower of Cetewayo's army, numbering over 20,000 men, attacked, they found the British troops drawn up in the form of a square, with cannon at each corner, mounted troops in the centre, and on each side of the square one row of riflemen lay prone on the ground, a second row kneeling and a third standing. These tactics enabled the British to pour a continuous and withering fire into the thickly packed Zulu ranks, the natives having been allowed to approach within sure rifle shot before firing was commenced. For twenty minutes the Zulus endeavoured to force their way against the hail of lead, but at the end of that time they turned and fled. The infantry thereupon opened out and the cavalry were able to pursue the fleeing natives. This battle ended Cetewayo's reign. He fled, and was eventually captured and imprisoned.

One of the most tragic episodes of the Zulu War was the death of Eugène Louis Jean Joseph Napoleon, at the hands of Zulu warriors, on June 1st, 1879. He was better known as the Prince Imperial. On the outbreak of war he volunteered his services and received a commission. On the fateful day he and several British officers set out on a scouting expedition, and they were ambushed. The Prince had dismounted, and was unable to regain

his saddle as the horse was too restive. Several of the party managed to escape, but he fell a victim to the attack.

From the aforementioned facts it will be apparent why the Zulus, even to-day, may be regarded as the most statuesque and physically fit of all African tribes. The tyrant kings of the past adopted the law of survival of the fittest, and there is no doubt, that whilst their methods may have been drastic and to us seem exceptionally cruel, they yet produced a nation physically and materially inferior to none. For many years their sole occupation had been fighting and war-like activities, and they had no opportunities for developing that commercial sense which is noticeable in other African tribes.

There is one other thing which can be recorded to the great credit of the Zulus—slave-traders gave them a wide berth. The Zulus formed one African nation which so prized all the members of its tribe, both male and female, that any attempt at slave-trading would have proved a very unprofitable and hazardous business. The women do all the domestic work as well as the tilling, sowing, and reaping of crops, whilst the young boys tend the cattle and goats.

All readers of Rider Haggard's "King Solomon's Mines" have admired the noble Zulu warrior Umhlopogas for his dignity, bravery, and wisdom, and the author's portrayal of this famous character was based on a most accurate impression of the genuine Zulu. Rider Haggard gained his inspiration from a Zulu of the same name, Umhlopogas, and this fine specimen of manhood and member of a noble race died in Natal at the beginning of the present century.

It can now be realised, therefore, that Africa, instead of being a vast continent populated by natives who are all similar, is inhabited by countless contrasting tribes at

varying stages of development according to the degree of influence which missionaries have been able to exert over them. Let us not underestimate the value of the great work of these brave workers, who, whilst not interfering with the natural, simple laws of the natives, awaken them to the value of the spiritual factor in their daily lives. And just as we can learn much from Nature, so might we learn much from the natives of Africa, whose fundamental and often primitive health rules could be copied with advantage by those of us in civilised nations who have drifted away from naturalness and have become victims of artificiality.

Fortunately, cannibalism has receded very considerably; but Nature would lose her most understanding friends if the native tribes were finally to become so civilised as to forsake the great forests and plains which have been their homes since time immemorial; then indeed the vast stage of Africa would be deprived of the leading players in the drama for ever being enacted in her magnificent scenery.

CHAPTER V

NATURE DID IT FIRST

"And what is art, whereto we press,
Through pain and prose and rhyme,
When Nature in her nakedness
Defeats us every time?"

KIPLING.

IT is a most remarkable fact that many of man's achievements and inventions were discovered and practised by Nature's creatures centuries ago, and, moreover, planned for the benefit of their happiness and welfare. This is indeed wonderful when one remembers that only the simplest of natural resources are available to animals, birds and insects, whereas the human world is overflowing with mechanical facilities which enable us to build, travel, preserve food, control temperature, cure sickness, and so on. Nevertheless, almost every human invention, and even every profession, has its parallel in Nature, and the extraordinary reasoning power of animals, and their simple way of living, is not only fascinating, but offers an object lesson which few of us can afford to ignore.

To-day, many of our ailments and troubles are being treated psychologically, it having been realised more and more that most of the shadows which darken our lives originate in mental unrest rather than in organic diseases. This nervous distress is directly attributable to unhappy, discordant living conditions, unsuitable environment, unnatural foods, unnecessary turmoil, and too much speed. In the natural world, the psychologist would have an idle time, for all creatures live according to the

laws of Nature—simply, and often happily. They are not hampered by artificial conditions—overcrowded cities, unfresh food, and hectic nerve-racking transport. Furthermore, they do not stand in need of progress as we know it, their methods of working being almost identical with those of their ancestors. Just as there is an ageless, unchanging beauty in the countryside, trees, mountains, streams, and flowers, unaffected as they are by the restlessness of humans, so there are unchanging methods of living amongst its myriad inhabitants.

To exemplify this, first let us study one particular phase of animal life—building and decorating, which reveals the existence of highly skilled constructional engineers, locksmiths, painters, and decorators. For instance, whilst we erect giant concrete structures built upon steel skeletons and hoisted into position by monster cranes, the beaver achieves the most miraculous examples of building without any mechanical aid at all. His unequalled ingenuity and intelligence are cleverly demonstrated when he builds a dam, for he cuts down trees, some as thick as telegraph poles, so that they shall fall exactly where he wishes them to fall and then cuts them into lengths of about four feet each. He builds his home in the middle of a pool with smaller branches, and then erects a reserve dam, so that, should a flood occur, the rush of water pouring over his main dam will not destroy the foundations as it falls into the lower water. However cautiously one may approach a beaver's dam, he is sure to know, and warn the whole colony by beating the surface of the water with his tail.

Equally ingenious, though in another and more delicate way, is the constructional work of the trapdoor spider, an example of which I studied in an old Arabian garden in Algiers. On a sloping bank of reddish earth, covered with moss and short foliage, I noticed a slight difference

in the texture of the former, and upon closer examination found it to be the lid or door of the trapdoor spider's residence, the construction of which was beautiful.

It digs a tunnel six or seven inches into the earth, and then weaves a lid, about the size of a shilling, complete with hinge, and covers it with earth and moss to make it indistinguishable from the surrounding surface. It then bevels the inside of the lid and the aperture so as to ensure a perfect fit and lines it with silken threads, with which also it upholsters the tunnel. If an enemy tries to force its way in, the spider hastens to the entrance, hooks its hind-legs to the lining of the lid, and its fore-legs to the side, resisting the intruder with all its might. Its reasoning powers are revealed by the fact that it frequently builds on a slope, keeping the hinge of the door *uppermost*, so that on leaving or returning the lid closes of its own accord. It lays its eggs on a silken net spun on the ground about two inches across, and with its spinnerets at the tip of its abdomen it weaves this into a bag, in which the eggs are placed and carried about until they are hatched. This reminded me of certain African natives, who, as soon as their youngsters are born, place them in grass mats and sling them over their hips or backs, carrying them about during the day's work.

It was the spider and similar delicate creatures which gave man the idea of the net, since developed for all sorts of varied purposes, ranging from fishing and hunting to keeping the hair tidy. The Roman gladiator, armed with sword and shield, was sometimes matched against an opponent with only a casting net as his defence, and it is worth noting that the latter was generally victorious. There is nothing more beautiful in the autumn than a spider's web or net when dewdrops throw into clear relief the craftsmanship of this marvellous creature.

These examples of how "*Nature did it first*" prove the

high degree of efficiency reached by quite small creatures, but in the feathered world equally remarkable feats are executed, foremost among which is that performed by an interesting personage which not only builds, but paints and decorates its efforts as well. This is the Bower-Bird, which I studied in Australia, an amazing creature which erects a special playhouse, utterly different from anything I have ever seen. It is a foot long and about six inches wide and is composed of small twigs wedged in the ground and bent over to form an arch, thus becoming a bower. The bower is concave at the base, forming a round space, the ends usually facing North and South.

As I have said, besides being a builder, the bower-bird reveals its artistic and decorative ability, for in front of its bower it arranges a most artistic collection of snail shells, berries, leaves, coins, bits of yellow and blue paper (colours for which it has a passion) and, in fact, anything bright it can find. It then paints the twigs of its bower with powdered charcoal mixed with saliva, grinding the charred wood with its bill, and using its beak as a painter's brush. These bowers last for several years, during which they are carefully maintained, being renovated each spring, when they are used as dancing halls. The birds pirouette in and out of them in a delightfully rhythmic way. Nowhere in the realms of ornithology can there be found another bird which builds a house for pure amusement, decorating it with brilliant objects, and with the skill of an artist.

In Africa I have seen a nest almost exactly like the one made by the pied granlina of Australia. This is a hard, sunbaked mud cup resting on the branch of a tree, and the earthenware vessels used by the natives have exactly the same shape.

Another fascinating fact is that "paper" was pro-

duced by Nature long before the Chinese had discovered how to make it; and here again the process is so similar to man's method that there can be no doubt he copied the idea from winged insects. The process is very simple. Vegetable or wood fibres are masticated by the insect until reduced to a pulp, and then, with its jaws, it spreads the pulp into sheets of different shapes and sizes, using them for various purposes in its home. When examining wasps' nests I have been surprised by the fact that the paper used by wasps is as varied in quality as that made by humans. There is also evidence that insects, like our own paper-makers, are careful with the material, and nothing is wasted.

In my early days I did a lot of tree climbing when photographing the birds of Britain, and I often used climbing irons, and I was therefore much interested in seeing how the natives at Mombasa climbed the coconut trees. Their method was much simpler than mine, and also more efficient, for it left both hands free. A strong piece of rope had been passed round the tree and the ends fastened together forming a large loop, which the native passed over his head and down until it pressed against his back, thus serving to support him as he leaned back with his feet on the trunk. By taking hold of the loop at each side, between himself and the tree, as he leaned back, he jerked the loop up the trunk as far as he could. The soles of his feet being against the tree, he literally walked up, hitching the loop at every step. When he reached the coconuts at the top, he merely leaned back, supported entirely by the loop, his hands being free to collect the fruit. This reminded me of the four years' struggle I had before I succeeded in obtaining a film of the caterpillar of the swallow-tail butterfly going into the chrysalis stage. The caterpillar fixed its tail to an upright twig, corresponding to the feet of the native climber,

and then took a few minutes to pass a silken thread around its body, similar to the loop the man had used. It then assumed the leaning position from the twig, exactly as the native had done. For a night and two days I watched the caterpillar as it remained stationary, and then with a sudden wriggle it began to throw off its skin, and in forty-five seconds it had been transformed into a chrysalis.

The African flying squirrel is one of Nature's many parachutists, which are especially numerous in the vegetable world. It appeared to me almost to glide as it skimmed from tree to tree, on each occasion losing height, so that it had to run up each time it alighted on a tree, to regain height once more.

Some time ago, an American aeronaut copied the parachuting methods of the flying squirrel, and gave exhibitions in England, jumping from an aeroplane. Alas, he tried it once too often, crashed, and was killed.

But for a really close resemblance to a parachute, the dandelion seed has no equal, and proves that man has indeed profited by the teachings of Nature.

As far back as the Middle Ages humans imitated the armadillo in the way he cased himself completely in armour, so that no weapon could reach his body, although, in his case, he was unable to rise after being knocked down!

Whilst on the subject of war weapons, there are the bee-sting and the poisoned arrow, which, beginning in Nature, have, as we know, been copied by man with many variations.

Another production of Nature inspired the native hunter of Africa with the idea of the fall "trap", some examples of which I saw in the Congo Forests. Perhaps the most vivid example is offered by the mangrove tree, a tropical growth which flourishes in mud and moisture

and produces seeds resembling elongated skittles, tapering to a sharp point at one end. These seeds hang on the tree with their points downwards, and when ripe they fall, and, by their own weight, pierce deeply into the soft ground. And here is the human parallel. The native developed the idea of waiting on the branch of a tree directly over an elephant path. In his hands he held a heavy piece of wood with a short spear attached to the end, which, when an elephant passed beneath he dropped straight down on his victim. Later, this device was developed into a booby-trap, by which hippos, coming on land at night to feed, were also caught.

From this evolved yet another variation of the trap, worked by a rope or sometimes by a vine. From a convenient branch a log-weighted spear was suspended, with a trigger release fixed across the victim's path. When the animal's foot touched the cord, it released the trigger, and down came the heavy log, driving the spear into its back. The spear was often coated with poison, so that the victim seldom escaped after being struck.

Related to this falling plan is the pitfall trap, originated by the ant-lion—a most deadly contraption which has been copied by the native for catching elephants and other big game. It consists of a deep pit dug in the path usually taken by the intended victim, inside which are embedded a lot of sharp-pointed hardwood stakes strong enough to kill the creature that falls on them. This basic idea has been carried even further by the white man who to-day makes similar pits for disabling tanks! Trenches, smoke-screens, and even gas attacks were all used in the world of Nature long before man ever thought of imitating them.

I was warned many times in the Congo by my native boys that there were several of these fall- and pit-traps in

the adjacent forest, and Jimmy Clark, of the New York Natural History Museum, who was with me, had a narrow escape from being impaled when on an earlier expedition. He suddenly vanished into one of these pits, and by sheer luck fell straight down between the sharp-pointed hardwood stakes which were intended for elephants. In time these devices, originally copied from Nature by natives, were improved upon by white men, who developed the spring bows and later the spring gun, which protected game from the poacher.

Nature's influence is again very much in evidence in the old forts in Britain, some of which are similar in form to those the elk makes of snow and earth, fashioning them with his feet. In winter the elk know they are in danger from wolves, and, as a defence against them, they select a convenient place where they can find food, and then trample down the snow so that they can sink themselves almost to their own height *below* the surrounding surface. This forms a kind of fort which wolves are afraid to attack, as they are suspicious animals and imagine there is some trap. If by any chance they did enter, they would soon be trampled or gored to death.

Incidentally, Ernesti had a few words to say upon the ingenuity of Nature's inventions, which I feel it would be opportune to quote here:

"Bwana, the white man has created many things of magic; he has made machines which enable man to travel swiftly through the air like a bird, and other machines which enable him to travel on the land with the speed of an antelope. He has made large dwellings (ships) which enable him to travel on the surface of the waters, and others which enable man to travel beneath the waters like the fish. Now, Bwana, these things tell of great magic, but they are things which have no life. They think not, they speak not, nor do they breathe.

When the white man finds a way to make one machine do all these things, then, Bwana, he will be as clever as Nature.

“For Nature has made such a creature which, as Bwana knows, is the wild duck. For although this bird speaks not a language known to man, it *does* make speech with others of its tribe, and, Bwana, this clever bird *does think*. For in the village of the white man where the wild birds are protected from the weapons of the hunter by law, the wild duck will approach man for food without fear, but the same bird is wary and afraid of man when he frequents the lakes and rivers far from the village of the white man.”

In whichever direction we turn, be it industry or art or domestic life, we find ourselves confronted by case after case where Nature originated what we claim as the invention of man.

Take the essential matter of *grinding*. Searching for the parallel in Nature's world, one discovers that the elephant's teeth form the *perfect* millstone, which man has endeavoured to emulate. To primitive people the art of grinding was a matter of vital importance, and in the beginning two stones were employed, one large on which the grain was spread, and a smaller one, held in the hand.

Natives all over Africa still use this simple mode of grinding, which entails a great deal of exertion, and so the men, who dislike anything in the nature of hard work, leave the grinding to their women-folk. On many occasions I have seen native women not only busily grinding mealies (Indian corn) but minding their babies as well. In civilised communities the methods of grinding have, of course, been developed and mechanised to a surprising degree, but the main idea of the millstone—movement over a ridged surface—existed before man

came on the earth. If one examines tooth-bearing animals, it will be found there are three types of teeth. There are, first, the incisors or cutting teeth, possessed by such creatures as beavers, squirrels, rabbits, and rats; then the canine or piercing teeth of the cat tribe; and, last of all, the molar or masticating teeth, so-called from the Latin word for a millstone, because their primary function is food-grinding.

But, as I have said, it is in the elephant one finds the greatest development of molar teeth, forming the exact equivalent of our human millstone. With use and wear a millstone becomes smooth and has to be replaced or re-cut, or it may wear out entirely, whereas the elephant's molars keep their facing absolutely sharp, and, at the same time, have the faculty of renewing themselves as fast as they wear away.

The more we study the ingenuity of Nature's creatures, the less important man seems to become, but, at the risk of taking him down a peg or two further, I will cite a few more examples of the creativeness of Nature.

Man did not think of the hammock until he had seen some examples in Nature, such as the one built by that interesting bird, the oriole. Its nest is woven from long vegetable fibres intertwined very much like the strings of a hammock. The oriole too is most up-to-date, and will actually use thread or pieces of string with which to weave its nest; and there are quite a number of birds which make their nests on the same principle. Other examples of the hammock idea are to be found in the insect world.

Come now into Nature's tool-shop, and see how certain creatures are equipped. There is, for instance, the woodpecker, the power of whose beak is as remarkable as the manner in which he employs that power. He does not merely peck, like so many other birds, but delivers a

powerful stroke with great force, his whole body being used to bring weight to bear on each blow. I have studied a great spotted woodpecker at work just a few yards away, chipping his way to gain access to some food I had placed in a bore-hole made in a tree-stump for the benefit of the tits, as the starlings had proved too voracious. This woodpecker, instead of feeding at the bore-hole, decided to get at the food by cutting another hole on the side of the stump, which he very quickly did with his beak.

The hammer used by geologists is very similar in form to the beak of this bird, being weighted at one end, the other being slightly curved, with a point similar to that of a pickaxe.

While searching for okapi and gorilla in the Ituri Forests, I found myself surrounded by all sorts of trees including the fig, the traveller's tree, and the paddle-wood tree. It was this last which gave man the idea of a buttress, while vines suggested the principle of the suspension bridge.

Now let us turn to the skilled art of tunnelling, and compare the efforts of man with the work of Nature. The excavation of tube railway tunnels calls for great ingenuity, experience, and good judgment and involves the use of costly appliances and instruments, and yet the much-despised earthworm is able to spend the greater part of his life in beautifully bored tunnels of his own making. He uses only the tools which Nature has provided him with, and handles an amazing quantity of soil. He burrows with great ease and obtains the necessary leverage for forcing his boring cutters forward by means of tiny bristles attached to each of his many rings. The soil which he excavates passes through his body and forms his main food supply, for he extracts from it all organic matter, such as decayed vegetation and dead

leaves, before it is evacuated. Earthworms are of great value to farmers and gardeners, for their burrows admit air and water to the soil and facilitate the passage of plant roots. In fact, his work can be likened to a natural system of irrigation.

If you watch artesian well borers at work, you will see that the boring is effected by long tubes passed slowly into the ground, the cutting being effected by the lowest tube, to which a special cutter is attached. The "core" of the earth or soil which is extracted reminds one vividly of the casts ejected by the humble earthworm.

Professor Darwin once calculated that on every acre of land in England more than ten tons of dry earth is passed through the bodies of worms and brought to the surface every year, and that the entire soil of the country must pass and repass through their bodies every few years.

The mole is, of course, another natural tunnel-maker, and he is both an efficient and fast worker, usually constructing a marvellous gallery of tunnels, using his five-clawed front hands as digging implements.

I have described but a few examples of the ingenious manner in which "Nature did it first", and one would be near the truth if one assumed that there is a natural parallel for almost everything which man claims to have invented. Skill, patience, and a definite objective—happiness—are the assets of Nature's craftsmen, all of whom know what they are doing, why they are doing it, and when it will be done. Truly, they create a strange paradox, for they reached perfection long before man began his struggle, and consequently do not have to seek constantly after "progress". All improvements, whether in housing, transport, or diet, have already been achieved, and little remains for them but to practise harmonious living as did their ancestors, surrounded

ironically enough by a human world ceaselessly striving to attain a higher degree of material efficiency and looking down on dumb creatures as inferior. It is indeed debatable whether or not the powers placed in our hands are always used to the best advantage, for we tend to travel in the wrong direction towards a complicated mode of living, instead of drawing near to Nature and her noble simplicity. Consequently, for a trustworthy guide in the art of living, study Nature, and learn her great truths, which have been perceived and adhered to in every age by those of most vision amongst men. I would again extract wise words from the writings of that great thinker Emerson:

“ Nature never hurries. Atom by atom,
Little by little, she achieves her work.”

“ And in the vaunted works of Art
The master-stroke is still her part.”

CHAPTER VI

CAMOUFLAGE (PROTECTION AND COLORATION)

“ Do I sleep ? Do I dream ?
Do I wander and doubt ?
Are things what they seem,
Or is visions about ? ”

BRET HARTE.

THE word “camouflage”, though often used in these stirring times, was seldom thought of by the man in the street until the Great War of 1914-1918. It implies some form of protective coloration or disguise, and whilst, originally, it was employed to cover the movements and whereabouts of human beings, to-day, hospitals, warehouses, factories, ships, and even some of our homes are concealed beneath futuristic patterns, which, from the air, appear as parts of natural scenery. The importance of this art was undoubtedly brought to the attention of the European Governments during the Boer War in South Africa, when it was proved conclusively that the red-coated British soldiers afforded unmistakable targets for the rifles of the more suitably attired Boers. As a result, and after numerous experiments, it was decided that a khaki colour offered great advantages on land, whilst the now familiar grey of fleets was found to be the least noticeable on the sea.

The glint of light from polished buttons and other articles of equipment is now obviated by the use, on active service, of such equivalents as do not so readily reflect light and require no polish.

Similarly, during the recent Russo-Finnish war, the Finns frequently outwitted the Russian troops by wearing

white apparel, which blended with the surrounding snow. As a result of this increasing knowledge and in view of the dominant position of the aeroplane to-day, both artists and expert photographers are invaluable to the fighting forces, for the expert can tell at a glance whether an innocent-looking photograph of a field includes a factory or aerodrome, because of certain shadows recorded by the lens. For example, the roof and walls of the building may be coloured so as to blend accurately with the surrounding countryside, but, except when the sun is directly over it, the erection will cast shadows, and these, of course, should not exist on what is supposed to be a flat surface.

It does indeed seem strange that, despite our scientific attainments, we have only recently appreciated the importance of an art which has been so aptly employed by Nature throughout the ages, and has, for hundreds of years, been adopted as a matter of course by so-called uneducated and savage races.

We have learned much about camouflage from both Redskins and African tribes.

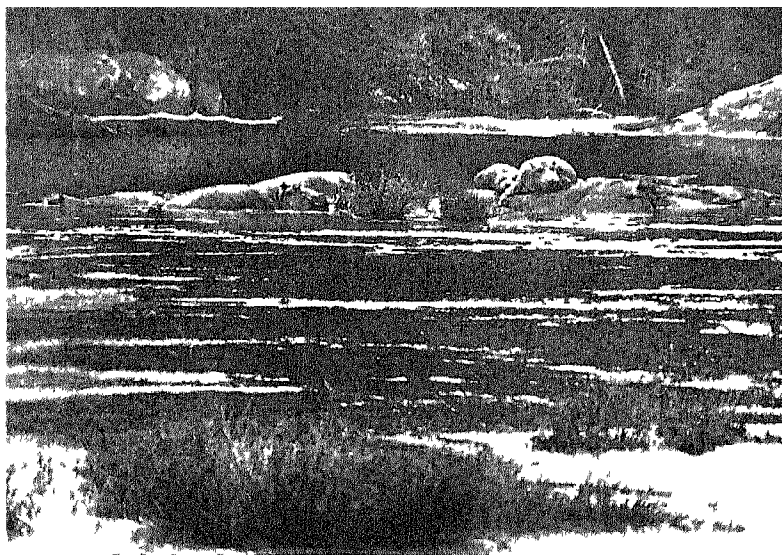
As a result of my own observations of Nature's creatures I am firmly convinced that their protective colouring and markings are known and appreciated by many of the creatures possessing them.

In my boyhood days in the Dales of North Yorkshire, I frequently watched young green plover as they ran about in the pastures—my point of vantage usually being the far side of a stone wall—but, as soon as they observed me, the little creatures would instantly drop and lie perfectly still, becoming almost indistinguishable from their surroundings, and, indeed, visible only to the trained eye. I had to exercise great care, when searching for them, to avoid trampling on any of the little fluffy creatures.

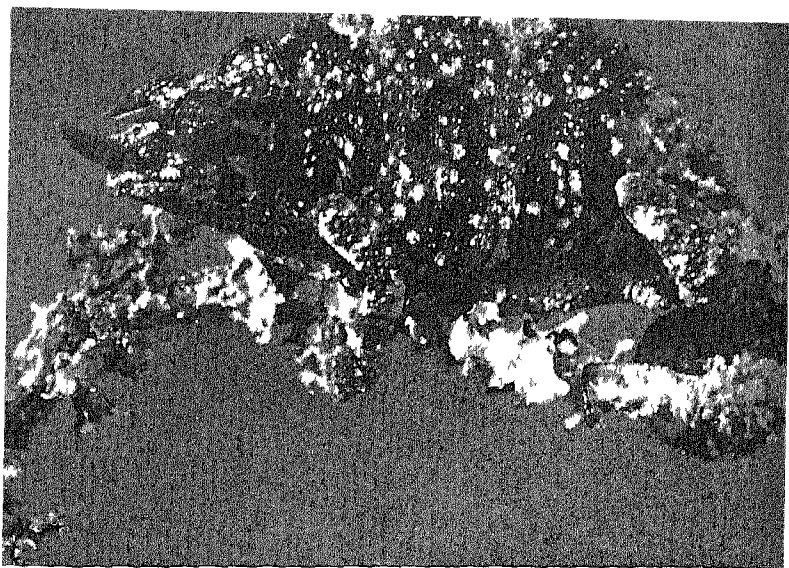
In my early photographic days, I was greatly interested in this matter of protective coloration, especially on my first visit to the Fårne Islands, where I made camera studies of the eider duck on her nest and young birds in sand and shingle. Undoubtedly they had complete confidence in their ability to make themselves practically indistinguishable from their surroundings by means of their colouring. In order, therefore, to obtain vivid pictures of them, I placed some of the young ones on my black focusing cloth and took several photographs so as to emphasise the difference which background makes.

On a bare Scottish mountain I must have been spotted by a ptarmigan resting amongst a small outcrop of rocks, for at first we were separated by nearly seventy yards, and it remained quite stationary whilst I drew nearer and nearer, and even when I was within six feet of it and secured my picture; but on my endeavouring to move still closer, it took to flight. The stoat, like the ptarmigan, has a black tail, so that both, by instinct, are able to "conceal" themselves by "fitting" into the natural scene.

A snipe, which I surprised in the act of feeding, immediately struck a statuesque pose, which it held whilst I obtained my photograph. Similarly, such birds as woodcocks and nightjars have this instinct of "colour protection" and the art of camouflage highly developed, and obviously appreciate the faculty which Nature has bestowed on them. Furthermore, many of them are possessed of clothing which varies according to climatic or geographical changes. For instance, during a mild winter when there is no snow at lower levels, the stoat, ptarmigan, hare, and other creatures who change to a winter dress of white, will betake themselves to the mountains or other high ground within the limits of the snow-line.

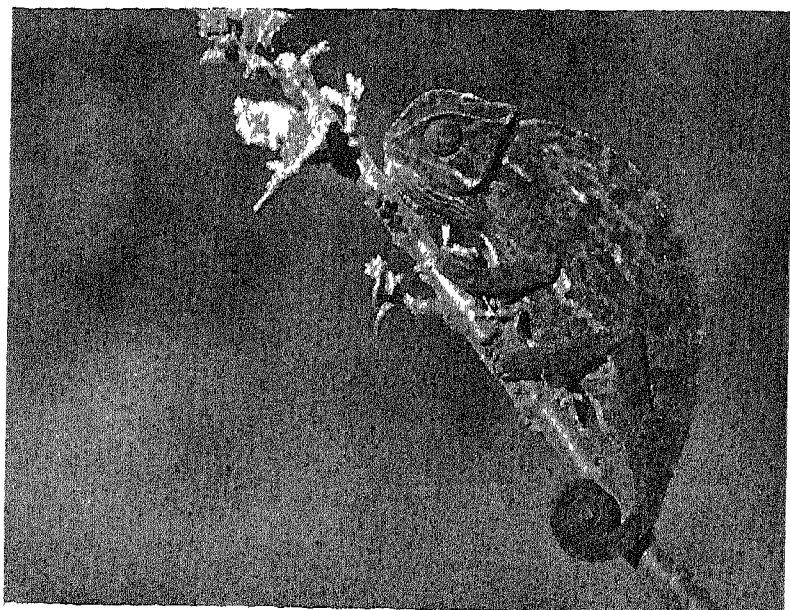


Above HIPPOS ON THE TANA RIVER



HORNED CHAMELEON

Both the Common and Horned variety are the acknowledged quick-change artists of the reptile world.



COMMON CHAMELEON

Forty years ago I commenced my many journeys through, across and around Africa, and became acquainted with innumerable animals, birds, insects, and reptiles whose existence depends as much upon their protective colouring as on their ability to hunt for food. During one trip across the Sahara Desert I enjoyed the company, for several days, of a little bird which always showed particular interest in me during the lunch hour, and I often failed to detect the little fellow at a distance of six yards until it actually moved. Again, as I approached a water-hole in Central Africa, I saw a sand grouse which had been busily drinking, and as I drew nearer, he rapidly considered the pros and cons of either trusting to his colouring and ability to stand motionless or risking flight. It decided on the former tactics, and squatted whilst I drew near to secure my picture, and only when I had retired some thirty yards away it flew off.

The giraffe undoubtedly realises the value of his camouflaged coat and his ability to stand perfectly still. On one occasion I observed from a distance a couple enjoying a meal of mimosa leaves, and, being anxious to obtain a record, I exercised special care in stalking them. Despite the inconvenience of thorns, war-like ants and other insects, I crept along a nearby gully, and then peeped over a rock, and made a careful survey, finding, to my disappointment, that they had gone. When I had satisfied myself that this was really so, I stood up, and, to my great surprise, saw that one was looking at me over the top of the tree, whilst the other was standing at the back of the bush, their colouring and immobility having made it difficult for me to detect them. They had been absolutely motionless watching me whilst I was trying to locate them, but immediately I showed myself they moved off.

Giraffe are also very difficult to detect on a stony hillside, but can easily be observed, of course, when on the open plains.

Both the lion and the leopard are almost indistinguishable to any but the experienced eye under certain conditions, such as a background of parched grass or leaves, which provides an almost perfect camouflage with which they merge. From a hilltop, one early morning, I had an excellent opportunity of watching a lion in the act of stalking some animals feeding on the plain below, but it was not easy to follow his movements owing to the skill he displayed in making the most of his natural background. His intended victims, however, had no doubts about his presence or movements and carefully maintained a distance of about fifty yards. Apart from the alertness of the herd, an old kongoni, stationed on an ant-hill, acted as sentry and issued periodical "bulletins" as to what Leo was doing. This information was conveyed by snorting and stamping. It is when a lion becomes the intended victim of the human hunter that his colour and a harmonising background are of the greatest value to him.

A study of my illustration of a cheetah will reveal the animal outlined against the sky, but this is because I photographed him from a low angle. Seen from the level he would have been hardly distinguishable from the mottled, tawny-coloured rock.

Many of the animals in Central Africa are, however, so vividly marked as to be always conspicuous. Zebra, wildebeeste, hartebeeste and certain species of gazelle are but a few examples, and all such creatures are safest when they frequent the plains or flat country which enables them to see as well as to be seen.

On one occasion I had the strange experience of failing to detect the presence of a herd of fifty zebra though only

one hundred and fifty yards distant, the reason being a peculiar light due to cloud effects, coupled with the inability of my eyes to adjust themselves to the change after being accustomed to brilliant sunshine. Their presence became known to me, however, as soon as they started moving. Feeling somewhat disgusted, I muttered a few curses, and Ernesti said, "Bwana is angry; he thinks he looked without seeing, but that is not so. Bwana has seen what few white men have seen—the spirit of the wilderness; it is a friendly spirit and dwells not in the towns of the white man."

The duiker, the steinbuck and the young kongoni often escape detection by lying down flat on the ground against which they rest their heads, whilst the oryx either adopts immobility or uses his background as a protection, according to the position in which he is feeding or resting. I have observed him employing both means, which proves that he knows not only how, but when, each should be used.

Thompson's gazelle, with a distinctive black line along its side, is another camouflage expert, although the wagging of its white stumpy tail as it departs from your vicinity is a clear indication he does not appreciate your company. Once, as I watched two of them disappear in the distance, I asked Ernesti if he could explain why the animals made themselves so conspicuous by openly displaying their tails. With the utmost seriousness he replied, "You see, Bwana, it is the custom of all white men to show their willingness to surrender by hoisting a white flag. Well, Bwana, these creatures are learning the laws of the white man, and gazelle are very wise, so when they show and wag their white tails they are only trying to say in the language known to the white man, 'You are a greater fighter than I am, so I will retire.'"

Mimicry, or "the close external likeness which causes

things really quite unlike to be mistaken for each other", is one of the most fascinating phases of Natural History, examples being the eggs of such birds as the plover and others which nest on the ground, or the moths which look like the bark of trees or leaves, and many small insects which resemble grass seeds. This has been planned, no doubt, to escape the sharp eyes of enemies. Many caterpillars also are protected by mimicry, such as the loopers which fix themselves by their hind-legs to a branch and make their bodies stand out so rigidly they look exactly like twigs; even two feet away an expert eye can rarely detect them, and I have often found and lost them again within a few seconds.

I was greatly impressed by an example of camouflage when crossing a high range of mountains in Africa, where, owing to a wound caused by a grass seed finding its way into my boot, I had been troubled for some days and nights with a septic foot which required frequent rest and dressing. At one point, as I was seated at the side of the path after rendering first aid to my foot, my attention was drawn to the beauty of the wild flowers surrounding me, one in particular attracting me as it appeared so superior to others of its kind; and so, before leaving, I made a closer inspection of this wonderful bloom, only to discover to my amazement that it, and many of the other apparently beautiful "flowers", were really butterflies. These insects resembled the flowers so closely that I found it difficult to distinguish them, and I have never before or since observed such a perfect example of camouflage; no human artistry could possibly equal it.

The chameleon is, of course, the acknowledged quick-change artist of the reptile world—his skill and natural gifts serving at one and the same time to preserve his life and enable him to secure his food. I have often ex-

perienced the greatest difficulty in detecting the presence of one of these highly gifted creatures, which seem to appear and disappear every few moments, owing to the rapid change of colour so as to harmonise with each new resting place. Searching for a chameleon is, in fact, rather like looking into an ever-changing kaleidoscope, for if the attention is distracted even for a second, one has to begin the search all over again. Its transformations are, perhaps, one of the most wonderful and interesting of all the miracles which Nature provides. During my travels I have frequently kept two or three chameleons for short periods as pets, and they have invariably displayed remarkable sagacity. They soon become friendly, although I have had several which showed signs of resenting my attempted friendship. It has been said that the chameleon is the sloth of the reptile world, but the statement is not altogether true, for I have seen one moving across open ground from tree to tree at a speed which was certainly not sloth-like. However, immediately upon arrival at its "hunting ground" its movements become slow and deliberate, especially in advancing towards its prey. One foot is slowly raised and held in the air as if it were uncertain whether to advance or not; every move indeed appears to demand a tremendous amount of thought before it is actually made. After a pause of ten to twenty seconds the raised foot is lowered to grasp the branch firmly with its hand, or claw, which possesses two digits on one side and three on the other and is rather like a human hand with two thumbs and three fingers. Then follows another period of meditation before it slowly moves forward, having first unwound its prehensile tail from the branch to permit the next advance. Each change of position is followed by a rest, and so, in an unbelievably slow and deliberate manner, he approaches his prey. Its movements can be

detected only by careful and extremely patient observation, and it is owing to this uncanny, silent and remorseless advance that some people credit the chameleon with the additional faculty of mesmerising its prey.

It is strange that such a slow-moving creature should depend for its food supply on the nimble fly and other fast-moving insects, but the secret of its success is, of course, its slow body movements, which give its victims a feeling of security, and its fast-moving tongue. The chameleon will occasionally pass several days without food, and extraordinary patience is one of its virtues. Many an angler would profit by copying its tactics.

The unusual position of the chameleon's eyes enables it to look both in front and behind simultaneously. The eye sockets are situated at each side of the head and the eyeballs which house the eyes are free to revolve in the sockets, so as to permit a semicircular movement. The eyeball is about the size of a pea and is slightly pointed where the eye lens is situated. When it seeks a victim its eyes move slowly *and separately*, backwards, forwards, upwards, and downwards, until it has decided that its victim is within exact striking distance. Then its mouth opens slightly, and the tip of its extraordinarily long tongue becomes visible. Suddenly, it shoots out this tongue with the speed of an arrow, and the victim adheres to the viscid substance with which the end is coated. Then the tongue is rapidly withdrawn, the captive is quickly crushed and swallowed, and the onlooker feels he has witnessed a remarkable conjuring trick which began in slow motion, and ended like lightning.

Half a century ago, I had a friend named Aflalo, who, at that time, was one of our most popular writers on nature. He begged me to try to secure a picture of a chameleon with its tongue out, and the London Zoo

kindly gave me the necessary permission. Accordingly, I took six photographs of one enjoying a small meal-worm off the end of a thin piece of wire. When developing the plates that evening, I found that none showed the tongue out, notwithstanding the fact that I had speeded up the shutter to the 250th part of a second. After considering the matter very carefully, I arrived at the conclusion that I had made a mistake in waiting until the chameleon's tongue emerged from its mouth, for at that critical moment my brain had to transmit its message to my hand, which in turn had to press the rubber bulb controlling the shutter, and it seemed clear that the functioning of brain, hand, bulb and shutter occupied more time than I had estimated. Therefore, I speeded up the shutter and decided, on my next attempt, to press the bulb when I *thought* the chameleon intended to strike. As a result, I secured two good pictures out of the six plates I exposed. In Nairobi, I secured a film record of a horned chameleon changing colour, and the photograph reproduced is one of the numerous pictures taken on that occasion. On completing my work, I handed over the chameleon to a local friend, who desired it as a pet, and I left on the next day for the Congo. On arrival at Uganda, I received a letter from this friend saying that on the morning after my departure the chameleon had an octette of baby chameleons !

There are several varieties, but the *horned chameleon*, which was first discovered by my friend the late Sir Frederick Jackson, on the slopes of Mount Kenya, is by far the most interesting. Many years ago I brought several to Nairobi, and left them in a friend's garden, where they settled down, and, on my return to Africa a couple of years later, I found a little colony of them in and around the same garden.

During a return voyage to England, I had a tame

one which soon became a universal favourite on board. What it thought of all the inquisitive humans surrounding it I dare not think, but if looks counted, the way its eyes rolled all over the place suggested, I imagine, that it thought very little of us !

A rather bald-headed passenger took a great fancy to it, and they became great friends. When he took a nap in his deck-chair the flies used to annoy him very much, but the chameleon one afternoon, resting close to his head, settled the problem by swallowing all the flies in the vicinity; and they became so attached that I had not the heart to part them on arriving home.

During my trip across Africa Ernesti became very excited as he noted my interest in the chameleon, and said, "Bwana, you have seen the wisest of all living things. Men rush into the future regardless of the mistakes and missed opportunities of the past and continue to make the same mistakes over and over again. This wise creature goes but slowly through life, looking not only forwards but backwards, so that he may profit by past mistakes and retrace his steps when necessary so as to seize any opportunity which might otherwise be lost. Yes, Bwana, the future depends on the past, and this fellow is the father of wisdom."

Among the insects there are many which "imitate" grass for protection, and others that make use of twigs, sticks, and the smaller branches of trees. The stick insect is one of the most remarkable examples, on account of its size and the shortness of its wings. I have seen them nine inches long, but the best specimen I have ever caught was well over a foot, and this was while lying on the ground during a fight in the Great War in Tanganyika. Perched on a dead twig this beautiful specimen never moved until accidentally touched, when it started to move its wings. I had no other means of holding

it captive, and so I placed it inside my open shirt front, but alas, it escaped unnoticed by me during the excitement of the skirmish.

Another amazing creature is the walking twig, about three or four inches long, and having the appearance of being covered with bark. So perfect is this imitation of a twig that not one person in a thousand would detect it.

Birds which nest on the ground, such as curlew, grouse and golden plover, differ in one respect from tree-nesting birds, for they learn to use their legs before studying the problems of flight. Soon after leaving the shell, they forsake the shallow nest and run hither and thither. While still very young, they display their protective instinct, as, for instance, when a hawk passes overhead, for they immediately lie flat on the ground, trusting that stillness and the harmonisation of their mottled down backs with the earth will enable them to escape observation. Young pewits, redshanks, ringed plover, golden plover, terns, grouse, partridges and sandpipers are all chicks that run about with a coat of down. Those that live among stones and sand have mixtures of grey down to match their surroundings, whilst those with homes amongst heather, dark bent grass, moss or dead leaves, have browns of varying shades, but none have a uniform colour. Young pewits and ringed plovers have a light-coloured collar of down round the neck, which breaks the continuity of their outline as they crouch amongst grass or pebbles and thereby assists them to escape detection; whereas the golden plover breeds on ground where there is a good admixture of yellow peat, moss and dark-hued plant life of stunted growth, and so the young, with its parti-coloured coat of orange yellow and brown, is equipped to hide with great success.

There is no doubt that many creatures, both great and small, which do not possess protective colouring, adopt the idea of remaining motionless, and are thus able both to escape notice and to observe possible foes. A big one-coloured animal like the elephant is most difficult to see under certain conditions; it needs an experienced eye to detect it thirty or forty yards away in high bush or thick forest.

If elephant or buffalo hear the warning cry of a baboon or other wild creature, they usually adopt a rigid pose until the possible enemy has been located, and, in many instances, they have no inclination to be aggressive. Many an experienced hunter has approached to within a few yards of these animals before discovering their presence. I have walked right past a young kongoni lying flat with outstretched head on the ground, and have only become aware of its presence through the keen eyes of my native camera-bearer.

The green mamba is a reptile that certainly believes in and practises camouflage. It is common in Natal, but I have only seen it twice in Central Africa. On one occasion I was taking some close-up photographs of a native's head, and being dissatisfied with a shining banana-leaf as a background, I stepped round the native, and broke off the leaf. Immediately, a big green mamba began to move, less than a foot from where my hand had been! This naturally gave me a fright, and I sprang back, nearly knocking the native over. Meanwhile, the snake quickly made its way down the tree and in a flash disappeared into some thick undergrowth a yard away. Both the boy and I had been close to that tree for some time, and yet neither of us had detected the presence of the mamba, which must have been watching us throughout and trusting to its colouring to keep it invisible. We were lucky to escape being

bitten, for the green mamba, like the black mamba, is a very poisonous reptile and strikes rapidly and without warning.

The detection of a python or a puff adder is extremely difficult when it is resting on a bed of dry leaves or in the vicinity of rocks. A lady living on the outskirts of Durban, South Africa, was disagreeably surprised when she mistook a sleeping python for a log of wood, and stepped on it when trying to reach some wild fruit just beyond her grasp. The pressure of her foot on the snake's body resulted in rapid movement, and, after a wild alarm, the snake was captured by nearby natives and imprisoned in a makeshift cage consisting of a large packing case covered on one side with wire netting. The lady spent a rather happy evening thinking of the enormous wealth she would acquire from the sale of Mr. Python, but she had a sad awakening in the morning, when it was found that the captive had burst the wire netting and got away. I have had several escapes through unintentionally stepping on puff adders, while travelling through the jungle. I think, however, that the crocodile is the most skilled of all in the art of immobility, and it is safe to say that the majority of human beings and animals who have fallen a prey to this loathsome reptile have lost their lives by mistaking the crocodile for a floating log or partly submerged rock.

These are but a few of the countless examples of the art of camouflage in Nature, an art in which the animals are being increasingly imitated by man. And, quite apart from the protective value of such ingenious colourings, I always think that a further lesson is to be learnt from Nature's system of camouflage—the value of harmony. For instance, it may not be necessary for our civilised women to wear colours which harmonise with the grass or the bricks or the pavements, for the sake of

protection, but there is no reason why they should wear colours which do not harmonise with anything—not even with themselves ! Humans have an unhappy propensity for disfiguring natural scenery by their ignorance of the laws of harmony, whereas, both for protective and purely æsthetic reasons, Nature always creates her scenes with a superb blending of colours. Trees, waters, skies, mountains, plains, are grouped in perfect harmony; and though they are always changing their hues as the hours pass, yet never for an instant does discord creep into the picture. Compare any natural scene with the world of man, or rather, don't, if you are sensitive to surroundings, for it makes one immediately conscious of discord. It is for this reason that the unspoilt places of the earth are so refreshing to the human race, for they provide an essential contrast to the artificial, badly-proportioned and discoloured world man has built around himself. Thus, we learn that colour is employed by Nature, not only as a protection for her creatures, but also to create a perpetual beauty to delight everyone with eyes to see.

“The purest and most thoughtful minds are those which love colour the most.”—RUSKIN: *Stones of Venice*.

CHAPTER VII

JUNGLE SOUNDS

" Sounds overflow the listener's brain,
So sweet, that joy is almost pain."

SHELLEY.

BOTH to the naturalist and to the lover of wild life highly developed senses of seeing and hearing are invaluable.

Conversely, for those who are not attuned to the voice of Nature listening is fast becoming a lost art. This is largely due to the mechanised state of modern civilisation and to the synthetic world it has built around itself. Travel in itself is sufficient seriously to disturb the sensitive ear, for victims of roaring, whistling locomotives, tube trains screeching their way through narrow tunnels, and motor-cars with whining brakes, discordant hooters, and throbbing exhausts, are the daily companions of millions all the world over. Add to these the aeroplane with its penetrating engines which shatter the quietness of the countryside in a few seconds, and it will be realised that the conquest of speed and the wonders of modern travel have also been responsible for depriving us of one of our most precious possessions—quietude.

This ceaseless cacophony of noises (as distinct from natural sounds), to which we may add pneumatic drills, loud speakers and itinerant musicians, blunts that sense of hearing by which we should be able to enjoy the countless softer and lovelier sounds of Nature.

Even in restaurants and hotels it has become more and more fashionable to dine, and try to converse, with incessant "sweet" music or jazz as an accompaniment.

In the so-called "good old days" such conditions would, of course, have been considered unbearable.

To appreciate thoroughly the sounds of the jungle one needs both a good sense of hearing and an understanding of the great art of listening. Indeed, many people who profess to be lovers of Nature would need much patience and experience before being really able to enjoy the beautiful sounds of wild creatures and birds, or, on the other hand, to realise how very blood-curdling and nerve-racking other sounds or noises are to those who have spent long, lonely hours hidden in the depths of vast forests.

Again, our modern civilisation is solely responsible for the poor eyesight of so many among us, as compared with that of aborigines and primitive natives generally. In his so-called "wild" state the Australian aboriginal, the African and most other native types, spend the greater part of their lives in great expanses, focusing their eyes on distant objects or upon such larger targets as wild animals. It is only when following a spoor or trail or, perhaps, removing a thorn from the flesh that the native uses his sight on small objects. The result of this is that there is less opportunity for the muscles of his eyes to become overstrained and tired in a harsh unnatural light, which, of course, is what impairs the sight of so many civilised people. From childhood, we spend a great deal of time reading small print, often under artificial light, and few of us have occasion to use our sight on distant objects, as natives do.

But let us revert to the art of hearing. This is actually the reception of vibrations on the human ear drum; and it is interesting to learn that there are many sounds of appreciable power which man cannot hear at all. In the early days of the gramophone, when recordings were made by mechanical means, it was soon discovered that both certain lower and certain higher notes played by

orchestral instruments could not be reproduced with any degree of accuracy. For instance, the boom of the big drum and the rattle of side-drums presented unusual difficulties. However, these were, to a great extent, obviated by the introduction of electrical recording. Similarly, many of the earlier wireless receiving sets possessed an extremely limited range, and some were, therefore, provided with special tuning devices for high and low register reception.

I believe that many of the animals, reptiles and insects of the jungle which are regarded as mute, emit sounds which, owing to the rapidity or slowness of their vibrations, are inaudible to the human ear. The giraffe, for example, is often said to be mute, but I doubt it, especially with a throat of that length !

The advantage of certain dog whistles now on the market is that, although they emit soft sounds, they can be heard by dogs three or four hundred yards away.

In this age of scientific invention it would be possible to construct an organ, a piano, or other instruments having a range far greater than those at present in use, but they would be of no value, for the higher and the lower registers would be inaudible to human beings.

Regarding the insect world, that famous Swiss entomologist, Auguste Forel, after years of patient study, wrote, "In my judgment, only crickets, and several other insects of that class, appear to perceive sounds. Erroneous views have been due to confusing hearing with mechanical vibrations." This means that whilst ants, for example, may be insensible to sound as we know it, they may be extremely sensitive to the vibrations which produce the sound. A human being can feel the vibrations of a floor or a bridge beneath him without hearing a sound, and thus is only interested in those vibrations. Nevertheless in such circumstances some notes are un-

doubtedly emitted, but their frequency or pitch is such that they cannot be detected by the human ear. When we hear a sound which interests us, it is the sound, and not the vibrations which cause it, that holds our attention, whereas with many insects the very opposite is true. Certain "deaf" persons have developed their sensitivity to vibrations to such a high degree that it is possible for them to distinguish movement which is quite inaudible to a person of normal hearing. Dogs and many other animals appear to be extremely sensitive to both sounds and vibrations. Thus a dog is often able to recognise his master's footsteps when they are so distant as to be inaudible to the most sensitive human ear. It is safe to assume that the progress of speech and music has been in proportion with the development of the human ear. The fact that animals and insects are less interested in speech or music may cause them to develop greater interest in the vibrations which produce sound rather than in sound itself. Sound vibrations can be conveyed by gases such as air, by liquids such as water, and by solids such as the earth, and many animals detect them by physical as well as by aural sensitivity.

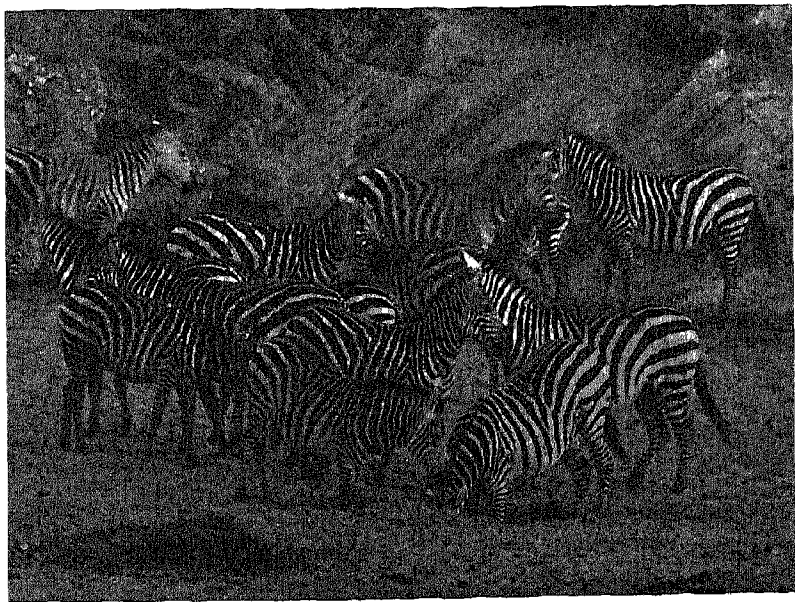
An interesting example of the way in which sound may be harnessed and made to travel occurred during the campaign in East Africa while we were protecting a stretch of railway not far from Kilimanjaro. I happened to be with the Signal Officer, and as we were enjoying a smoke some fifty yards from the railway line, he drove a piece of metal into the ground and attached his telephone cable to it, and we listened to a conversation between two station-masters at least a mile away.

Regarding the voices of Nature, Camille Flammarion, the well-known French astronomer, writes:

"Living nature had remained dumb up to the end of the primary epoch. To the noise of the waters and the



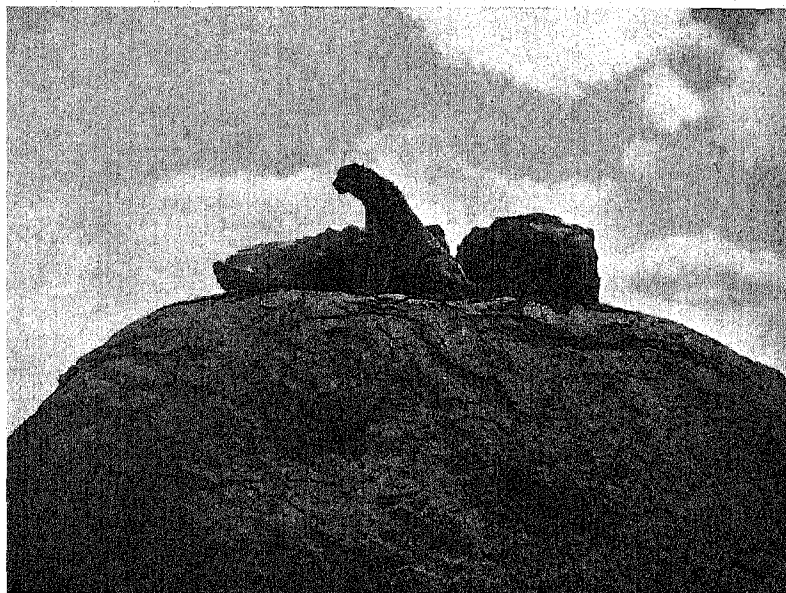
THE DWARF MONGOOSE OFTEN TAKES POSSESSION OF AN UNTENANTED ANT-HILL



THE ZEBRAS CAME TO DRINK



LAND MONITOR



waves, of the wind in the leaves, of storm, thunder, and tempest, molluscs and crustaceans and fishes were still deaf. Then, the insects began to hum, the grasshopper struck his elytron, the frogs croaked, the giant saurians bellowed or cried, and, at last, the birds sang. The perfection of the voice has been as an image of the perfection of life. Already, in the bleating of the ewe calling her lamb, in the mewing of the cat, in the barking of the dog, in the roaring of the lion, as in the song of the bird, Nature is speaking, putting forth her rudimentary attempts at a language. We are far from humanity, no doubt, but we are much nearer than in the mute ages of fish and zoophytes."

On one occasion, a radio programme included a number of gramophone records of animal voices, which came over quite clearly, but I was amazed when the commentator informed listeners that the records afforded an opportunity of hearing the sounds produced by jungle dwellers during the night. As soon as the programme terminated, I informed the commentator by telephone that his remarks had been misleading and listeners had been given an entirely false impression of what might be heard in the jungle during the dark hours. His reply was, "They were recorded in the Zoo." Now, I have spent a great part of my life in the jungle by day and at night, and I say emphatically that the behaviour of the majority of animals in captivity is very different from what it is when they are living under natural conditions in their native haunts. An accurate record of the voice of the jungle can only be obtained by recording in the jungle, where animals are free and unaware that their "private lives" are under observation or that their voices are being recorded. In Central Africa, where the greatest number and variety of animals live, there are, on an average, all the year round, twelve

hours' daylight and twelve hours' darkness, but very few sounds are ever heard during the daytime, although many may be made, of course, which are beyond the limits of reception by the human ear, as already explained. Of the audible noises, the crocodile makes a sound best described as a grunt, which is very similar to the grunt of the hippo. In fact, I could hardly tell the difference when they surrounded my small craft during a trip along the Upper Nile.

On Lake Victoria there lives a famous old crocodile which is regularly fed with fish by the natives, and though he may be a mile away and completely submerged, he promptly arrives in answer to a call—the natives either shouting his name "Lutembe" or striking the water with a piece of flat wood. I was fascinated to see him—a mere black dot in the distance coming round the bend of the Lake, which, on coming nearer, resembled a piece of floating tree trunk. As he walks out of the water on to the bank, he is seen to be a most repulsive-looking crocodile, which promptly gobbles up the fish that is thrown to him. As it was obviously impossible for him to have seen the native striking the water to call him, we can safely assume that he was guided by vibrations. When crossing a river infested by these saurians, the natives cup their hands and strike the water vigorously, which has the effect of scaring the crocodiles away. I have crossed rivers infested with these monsters many times up to my waist in water, and the precaution always proved effective.

Turning to the pleasanter sounds, I think the call of the bell-bird and the cooing of the dove, when heard in the early morning as one walks through a glade, are enchanting and refreshing, just as the twittering of countless small birds makes a pleasant contrast to the eerie sounds heard at night. Hornbills of various species can

often be heard, and their cry always reminds me of the bleating of a lost Moorland sheep.

In 1900 I devoted a lot of time to recording the songs of the nightingale and thrush on a phonograph, fitted with giant wax cylinders, but my efforts, at a complete run, were a failure, owing to the scratching of the needle on the wax. Although the birds were from eight to ten feet away, they heard the recording above their own voices, and after two or three seconds stopped to listen, which, of course, spoilt the record. This showed how sensitive was their hearing. Indeed, the very acute sense of hearing possessed by birds no doubt aids many of them to detect the exact whereabouts of their prey. As thrushes hop about quietly in fields, they will halt at intervals to listen, with their heads cocked on one side, and, after several seconds, will rush forward and seize a worm. I recall many hours spent watching them doing this, the result often being a tug-of-war, the bird hanging back and pulling until it was obliged to prop itself up with its tail. Woodpeckers running up a tree stop suddenly to listen, in order to discover larvæ at work driving tunnels in the wood. To learn how wood transmits sound to the advantage of the woodpecker, I climbed a forty-foot tree, and, putting my ear close to the trunk, was able to tell exactly how many times my brother, from ground-level, scratched it with a penknife. I shall never forget the reaction of a group of penguins to a gramophone record of a band playing. Certain notes seemed to interest them, whilst others made them run away for several yards, where they would put their heads on one side, and then waddle nearer again to hear more. Their antics and expressions under the influence of music were unbelievably grotesque.

Except for the sounds and songs of birds, the jungle, on the whole, is silent during the day, and, therefore,

very unlike the noisy sort of place it is invariably depicted as being in the average modern sound film of "the wilds". One great film blunder I remember showed a giraffe uttering weird and wonderful sounds, whereas, as I have already said, it is an accepted fact that giraffe have never been known by man to utter a sound. That they have some extraordinary method of communicating with each other is certain. I have seen a herd strung out in a line travelling over the rise of a hill into the next valley. The leader, who was descending, was completely out of sight of those following, yet when he suddenly turned left, the rest did the same. "How was it done?" I asked myself.

As day closes and darkness quickly descends, a few sounds may be heard made by birds on their way to their usual sleeping quarters. Among them is the crested crane, which utters what always strikes me as a very mournful note. Almost immediately after the sun has disappeared the land is folded in darkness, there being no twilight in Central Africa. It is at this period that the first animal call will be heard, usually that of the hyena. He may be far away or quite close to your camp, his daring depending upon the degree of his hunger. The hyena's wailing howl is a mournful and discordant note, which can create in one a dreadful feeling of loneliness. I am referring to the spotted hyena, an ungainly, cowardly creature, whose voice is in keeping with his appearance. But the laughing hyena is the striped species. I have had these near my camp on three or four occasions, uttering their hideous cries, which cannot be likened to laughter of any kind, being far more like the moanings of a lost soul in torment. Only twice have I heard a hyena utter what might be described as a laugh, but, even then, it sounded more like the hysterical cry of someone demented. It was while camping on the banks of the Tana River

that I heard several of these animals rendering their horrible chorus about 1.30 in the morning. They kept it up for so long that I was almost driven to distraction. At last, I could stand it no longer and sent a lead message in their direction across the river. Thereupon they departed, and I managed to sleep again.

The hyrax, or rock rabbit, is a nice, pleasant little fellow to look at, but his vocal efforts are by no means so attractive, for his cry or call is identical with that of a trapped animal suffering intense pain, and a chorus of them often sent a shiver down my spine. On one occasion an owl added his threatening screech to the discordant choir.

I would ask you, when reading of these strange cries, to visualise the setting I heard them in—dense jungle at night, far away from human habitations, and enveloped in a velvet blackness which created a silence that seemed almost solid. In such circumstances all these strange cries were intensified, and the silences between the interruptions seemed more sinister. I recall, after a brief period of dead quietness, hearing the challenging roar of a distant lion, which drew a prompt acceptance from another, nearer my camp. The sounds from a lion are very varied. On occasion all one may hear in the night is his horrible “grunt-grunt-grunt”, which usually means he is on the hunt. But why should he reveal his whereabouts to other animals if he is on the hunt? you may ask. The grunting is to disturb the zebra and other creatures and, if possible, drive them towards the lioness which is lying in ambush.

I succeeded in obtaining many excellent flashlight shots of wild life on the prowl in the jungle or in the act of drinking at a water-hole. On several occasions I lay on the branch of a tree, which formed a safe perch from which my camera and its subject could be seen on

ignition of the "flash". From this position I heard the soft "pad, pad, pad" of several zebra walking warily along the path. They moved with extreme caution, pausing frequently, on the look-out for any possible nearby danger. They presented an uncanny picture of ghost-like shapes in slow procession. Suddenly, the comparative stillness of the night was shattered by the nerve-racking growl of a lion, followed instantly by the sudden thundering of scores of zebra hooves. But the tumult soon subsided, and later, as I heard the zebra calling to each other in the distance, I knew that at least one of their number had reached the end of its trail, and I visualised it lying not far away, with its neck broken, and the lioness standing by, as if to make quite sure it would not escape whilst she awaited the lion. Soon I heard a peculiar whimpering sound which told me he had joined her, and during the feast which followed I could clearly hear the sound of flesh being torn, which was not at all pleasant, but I realised the ability of the lion to talk and eat at the same time and the savagery and power of his vocal efforts.

Last year a wildebeeste was killed by a lion within two hundred yards of my sleeping-place, and then a fierce combat ensued between him and a greedy rival. In the morning I saw one of them, badly mauled, wandering from bush to bush as if dissatisfied with the protective shade, but in reality he was limping along and obviously suffering great pain. Only a mile away I spotted his opponent—a huge fellow with a black mane, lying in the shade of another bush with a lioness.

I have always contended that lions are ventriloquists, for they can give the impression of being near or far away at will, simply by putting their heads to the ground or by raising them when uttering their grunts and roars. I had proof of this when I watched a lion walking along

and roaring in broad daylight barely a hundred and fifty yards away.

An incident I shall not forget was when a lion was lassoed by Buffalo Jones and his two cowboys in the Great Rift Valley. I spent a good deal of time with the great beast, and we became quite friendly during the ten days before it started on its long journey to America with its captors. Some months later, I happened to be in the Bronx Zoo in New York and I had ample proof that the lion knew my voice before actually seeing me.

Near the Abyssinian border I once hid in a bush at daybreak, to obtain a film of vultures and jackals feeding off the remains of a lion's kill. A good deal of the victim's body had survived the feast, but by the time two Nandarobo arrived, about half an hour later, nothing but the skeleton remained. On the approach of the newcomers, the vultures flew off. Then the Nandarobo held a short conversation and strolled in my direction. When they were about ten yards away, I stopped turning the handle of my silent camera. Only the lens was exposed under shadow, and, although they are so keen-sighted, it escaped their notice, and so I tried the effect of firing my rifle into the air. They jumped, gazed in every direction but the right one, and so I fired another shot, whereupon they immediately stampeded in the direction from which they had come.

When alarmed by the presence of danger, such as scent of a lion, the buck emits a sound like a jet of steam under high pressure, and immediately sprints for safer regions. In contrast, the rather feeble yelp of the jackal closely resembles that of the English fox, and, in the stillness of the African night, it is easy to imagine, when hearing it, that one is in the far-away English countryside.

In the vicinity of African rivers or lakes the power of a hippo chorus can be heard and appreciated to the full.

The vocal chords of this mighty, and not altogether unfriendly, amphibian convey the impression that our most powerful air-raid sirens are by no means as penetrating as they might be.

Camping at the upper end of Lake Navasha, I was kept awake for the first two nights by the hippos' incessant grunting, which, at times, developed into a roar which one imagined could only have been created by a massed battle of lions. Later, I discovered my camp had been pitched close to their feeding-grounds, and they deeply resented my intrusion.

I have heard similar grunting during daylight on the Nile, where scores of hippos surrounded me, blowing, grunting and diving. But for the fact that I was in a very large iron rowing boat, they would have upset the craft.

There are many cases on record of boats being smashed to bits and the occupants drowned through being attacked by hippo.

In the Congo forests it is the elephant which is entitled to lead the jungle chorus, by reason of the immense power and range of his vocal organs. The wails and howls of the most powerful jazz trumpeter are but the tiny squeals of a mouse compared with the volume of sound emitted by a trumpeting elephant at full concert pitch. The noise is far from pleasant and my nerves have been severely tried by it on more than one occasion, especially when anger has been the cause of the uproar. The elephant can slur from the bottom to the top of his register with a speed and ease that is astonishing.

By carefully camouflaging myself with leaves and tree branches in the dense Ituri forests, I had excellent opportunities of studying, with enjoyment, the antics of chimpanzees in the tall trees overhead. Their vocabulary seemed to be far more limited than that of the tame ones with which I had been so intimately associated

for years. No doubt constant contact with human beings awakens in these friendly and lovable creatures their imitative instinct, and they produce a greater variety of sounds in their efforts to converse in the language of their new friends. On numerous occasions I have interrupted a party of chimps by trying to imitate their remarks. Upon hearing me the majority would cease their frolics, whilst one or more of the more inquisitive fellows would decide to investigate. With cautious movements they would approach, and quickly discover me. Immediately their alarm signal would be given, which hastily ended the proceedings without ceremony of any kind.

In my boyhood days the press of the world devoted a great deal of space to Professor Gardiner's attempts to study the ways and language of the chimpanzee. Readers were led to believe it was an undertaking which not only called for patience of the highest order, but also involved great danger, and the world regarded it as a hazardous enterprise. But instead of using a "hide-up", the Professor made his observations from behind the bars of a specially constructed iron cage, and, as may well be imagined, the results obtained were of very limited value. The natives, who are well acquainted with the ways and habits of the friendly chimp, had every reason to regard the Professor's strange methods as merely another example of the white man's peculiar follies.

My famous chimp, "Toto", was, for some months, a resident in the old Chimp House at the London Zoo, and whenever I paid him a visit, he never failed to create a terrible hullabaloo long before I arrived within range of his vision. Despite the many people who happened to be approaching at that moment, by some extraordinary means he knew that I was amongst them, and the keeper at the side-door used to say on opening it for me, "I knew it was you, sir; Toto's just told me!"

I have often wondered how this communication was effected, and have come to the conclusion it was an example of vibratory transmission. As compared with chimpanzees, baboons have a fairly lengthy vocabulary, but are in every respect more dangerous and aggressive. The leader of a herd is always a despot and retains his position only so long as he is able to satisfy his fellows that in strength, cunning and wisdom he is superior to his rivals.

At all times, the troop is under the watchful eye of a sentinel, and I have had many promising shots ruined by the interruption of this alert gentleman. Strangely enough, the alarm call of the baboon is understood and greatly valued by other dwellers of the jungle.

On one occasion I had a hide-up near a water-hole on the Abyssinian border, and all preparations had been made for photographing thirsty visitors. The first caller was a giant bull elephant, but, as night had fallen, photography was impossible. He adopted the usual method employed by elephants—drawing the sand away from the water-hole with his trunk to a depth of about eighteen inches, sufficient water then being available for thirst-quenching. My hopes of a photograph ran high as the mighty fellow lingered in the vicinity during the night, and, as daylight approached, my impatience grew more and more unbearable. You can imagine my relief when at last I decided it was light enough to commence operations. However, no sooner had I succeeded in focusing the camera, than a baboon, at least a quarter of a mile away, uttered his warning cry—a short sharp bark. The elephant's reaction was instantaneous. Up went his trunk, feeling for the wind, and his great ears spread out as he looked in my direction, but I was out of his wind, so that he could not glean anything. A second later he turned and moved off silently up-wind, and,

although I chased after him for over a mile, he never stopped. I noticed particularly a huge tree that the great beast had pushed over, and as I paused and sat down on it, I came to the conclusion that it would have been useless to try to escape from him by climbing any of the trees in the neighbourhood !

In that "hide-up" at the water-hole, I had another experience of baboon language. A troop of about a hundred and thirty came along the bare hillside and stopped a hundred and fifty yards away. It contained mothers with their babies riding on their backs like small jockeys, grown-ups, and "youths". A big old fellow, apparently the leader and weighing about 130 lbs., came leisurely down to the water-hole and sat on a piece of rock. He examined everything, looked carefully around, and then stared straight at my hide-up for some time. However, it must have looked very natural, for he never spotted me. Apparently satisfied, he then sat resting his arms on his knees, and lazily scratched his side. He looked so human that I whispered to my companion, "Jim, he's feeling for his pipe and is going to smoke in a minute." A little later he gave a peculiar bark, which apparently meant "All clear", for instantly the whole troop came hurrying down. I shall never forget the sight of a mother with a baby 'on her back stooping by the side of the great chief, lifting the youngster off, and then stooping down to drink from the hole which the elephants had made. The old fellow picked up the baby, examined it critically, then dropped it on the ground and resumed his watch. Suddenly, one of the baboons gave the alarm call, and the whole company bolted pell-mell down the river bed. After travelling about sixty yards they all stopped, knowing it had been a false alarm. Then one mother missed her youngster, which had bolted into a thorn tree on my left

barely fifteen yards from my hide-up. She came back cautiously, the old chief following a couple of yards behind, both stopping now and then to satisfy themselves that no danger threatened. Meanwhile, I could not get my camera to bear on the tree, as it jammed against the stonework of the hide-up. At last she arrived at the foot of the thorn tree, and she held up her arms exactly as a human being would do, and the descending youngster dropped into them. Uttering a peculiar little sound as she hugged it to her breast, she made slowly off. The old chief was facing my hide-up, and had evidently noticed my camera lens, at which he was uttering threatening grunts. However, when he saw the mother several yards away, he moved off, but frequently turned round, raised his hair, bared his teeth, and grunted, as if to say, "You come out if you dare!" Naturally, I was relieved when he finally departed, for a baboon of his size could have soon ended my career.

On another night I heard the curious coughing noise of a leopard, which is unique, even in the jungle. Later I heard awful sounds coming from the troop of baboons, and I realised that the leopard was after a meal, and was trying to get at them in the palm trees.

I spent several nights in hide-ups in the jungle, on the plains, and near a water-hole for the purpose of hearing and making notes of the various sounds emitted by animals, birds and insects during the dark hours. On one such occasion Ernesti accompanied me and rendered very valuable assistance by promptly recognising the various sounds which came to our ears. On our way back to camp next morning he entertained me with his quaint views on the matter of pleasant and unpleasant sounds. Adopting a confidential tone, he started off, "Bwana is indeed wise in wishing to hear the calls of all living creatures in this land, for many of them were

strangers to him. What we heard in the night, Bwana, spoke of love and war, joy and fear, but there are sounds which I trust Bwana will never hear; they are the most pleasing of all, but they are born of torture and suffering and dwell in the land of Despair. Yes, Bwana, even on the borders of Death. While Bwana has the things which he desires, his ears will be deaf to them." I asked, "What are the sounds you speak of?" And he explained, "When I was but a child, my father accompanied a white traveller on safari and they journeyed to a land where there were burning sands, great heat, and nothing that was green. Bwana, it was a country without water. The white traveller was indeed a fool and knew not the value of this gift of God. After three days' travel in this land, the water supply, brought by certain of the carriers, was exhausted. Being now possessed of great fear, the safari sought to return whence they had come. But, Bwana, the heat was so great that by the end of the second day they were near to death. On the first day the natives and the white man had prayed aloud to their Gods for rain, but on the second day they prayed only in their minds, as their tongues were so swollen that they could neither speak nor cry aloud. Their sufferings were indeed beyond the knowledge of ordinary men. When Hope had taken its farewell and the cloud of Death was fast approaching, there came to the tortured men the sound of great booming in the Heavens, followed soon by the splashing of heavy rain. Bwana, my father spoke truly when, as a very old man, he told all to whom he spoke that the most pleasant sounds made by any living thing are far less pleasing to the ear than the booming of the heavens and the splashing of rain in a waterless land. Yes, Bwana knows that even in this land the white priests sometimes pray that the farmers may hear the falling of rain to save their crops,

but, Bwana, no man prays that he may hear the song of a bird, the call of an animal or even the voice of man. To any tortured or agonised mind, what sound can be so pleasing as that of the voice which says 'Relief is at hand'? May Bwana never hear those sounds or voices!"

The ostrich emits a peculiar sound which, some say, closely resembles the lowing of an ox in pain, although to my ear it resembles the sounds made by a lion. It is likened by others to the booming of the bittorn, whilst in the Scriptures it is spoken of as a "wailing"!

Some rhinos, playing round a tree in which I was hidden at night, squealed more like pigs than anything else; but, strangely enough, when these great beasts charge at one, they make an entirely different noise, very like sudden bursts of escaping steam from a locomotive.

The rhino, like the elephant, has poor eyesight, and so it has to depend on sound and scent, its hearing being very highly developed and so making up for its poor sight. I was greatly interested, while in the Zululand Game Reserve last year, when told by the native Police Rangers who accompanied me that they had discovered something new and interesting in regard to the black rhino.

Incidentally, this delightful Reserve, with its many species of animals, is well worth visiting if only for the purpose of seeing the rhino, but he is an uncertain brute, and if one happens to disturb him suddenly, he may charge.

These Zulu watchers had been provided with police whistles, and quite by chance discovered that if the rhino hears a blast on the whistle, he will immediately turn and retire at full speed; which clearly indicates the effect of a strange sound on his sensitive ears.

In the heart of the Borneo jungle I listened for hours

to the delightful calls of the gibbon baboon, better known to many by his well-earned name "the Wah-Wah monkey". He advertises his name in tones of varying pitch, and runs up and down the scale with remarkable speed. One fellow in particular showed little sign of fear and continued his vocal performance until I reached a position almost immediately below the branch on which he was. On seeing me he assumed the most unusual attitude, for his face was turned in my direction, but his back also was towards me, and some minutes elapsed before I realised that his head was between his legs to enable him to look backwards. This posture was maintained as long as I stood perfectly still. Immediately I moved away, Mr. Wah-Wah resumed advertising his presence and name for the benefit of all within earshot. The gibbon baboon swings amongst the tree-tops with an ease and grace delightful to behold, every movement seeming effortless. He is indeed one of the most fascinating creatures in the jungle.

During this particular stay in the Borneo jungle, I became acquainted with the most interesting of the local insects, known as "The Time Keeper", because it starts its recital at six o'clock each evening, continues for half an hour without a break, and then terminates abruptly and punctually at six-thirty. A sort of jungle broadcasting Time Signal.

The sound is rather like that of the South African insect known as the Singer, which in appearance is like a squat and very stout Cricket and begins his monotonous but not unmusical chirp at sundown. He clings tightly to a tree bark and is somewhat difficult to detect owing to his colour and form. Other insects of this type are, of course, plentiful in the Congo Forests.

The croaking frog of Nairobi, and Algiers, are noisy choristers, and although their tones vary to a certain

extent, the general effect is very monotonous and most unmusical. On the other hand, the whistling frog of Brazil issues a very tuneful call, reminding one of a London errand boy calling his pal.

During my long years of travel I have heard a great deal about talking drums and have personally sent messages by drum language for long distances in the Congo, but, on the other hand, I have known natives in possession of the news when there was no possibility whatsoever of its having been transmitted by drum language, and this I have attributed to some form of telepathy. I believe it is a case of one brain happening to be tuned in to another, and I imagine that the brain or instinct or sensitivity of the native, not being distracted with countless ideas and irrelevant thoughts as the civilised man's mind is apt to be, is much more receptive. I could quote numerous cases where it was impossible for drum transmission to have been involved in the transmitting of news, and I can think of no other explanation than that I have suggested.

I have often attempted thought transmission, and am satisfied in my own mind that surprising results can be and have been obtained by this means.

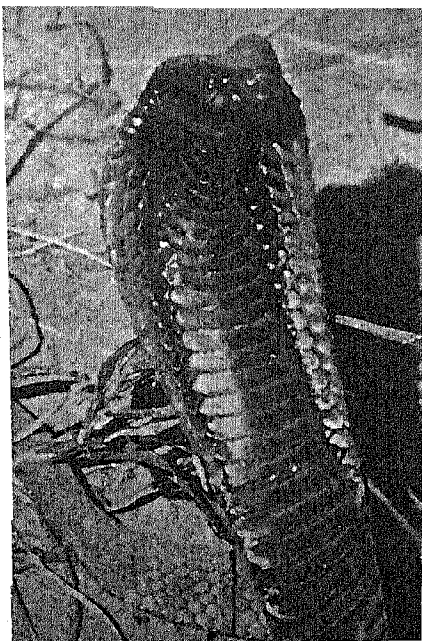
From these observations it will be clear that Nature offers to those with ears to hear a world of sounds distinct from those in the sphere of Man, and that if, through patient study, one learns the language of Nature's creatures, a great story is thereby unfolded containing all the wisdom Man need know.

It was Longfellow who wrote:

“ And Nature, the old nurse, took
The Child upon her knee,
Saying, ‘ Here is a story book
Thy Father has written for Thee.’ ”

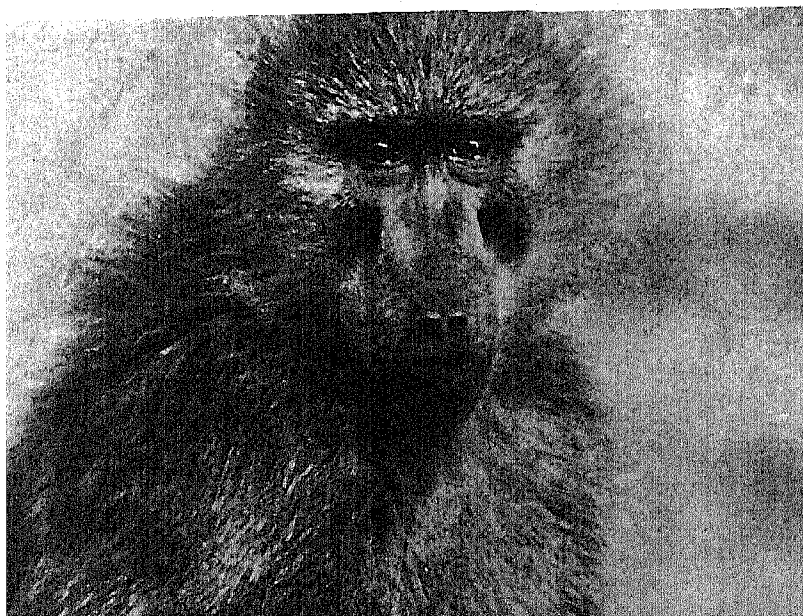
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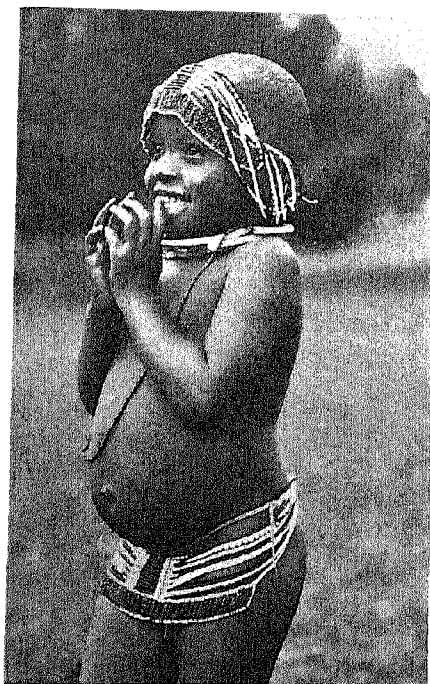
IN SOUTH AFRICA THE
GOBRA IS CALLED THE
SPITTING SNAKE



Below:

THE BABOON IS A
DANGEROUS AND
AGGRESSIVE ANIMAL



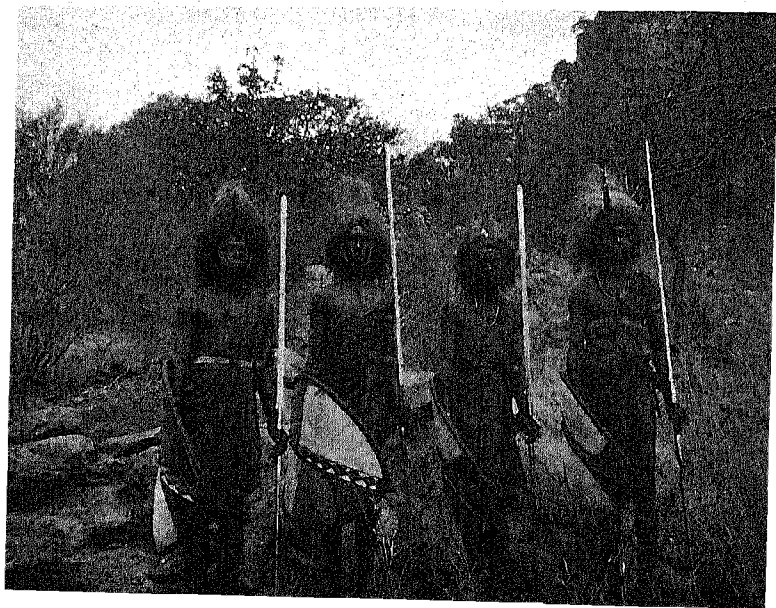


Above:

NATIVE CHILDREN ARE
ALWAYS HAPPY

Below:

A GROUP OF MASAI
SPEARMEN, EACH HAS
KILLED A LION SINGLE-
HANDED



CHAPTER VIII

HOMES WITHOUT HANDS

" No workman steel, no ponderous axes rung,
Like some tall palm the noiseless fabric sprung.
Majestic silence !"
HEBER.

THERE are so many wonderful and efficient home-builders in the animal, bird and insect kingdoms that opinions often differ as to which of these interesting creatures may be regarded as the master-builder of them all. Appearance, utility, strength and convenience seem all to be catered for by these natural craftsmen in varying degrees, though, on the whole, utility is their main objective, and by that I mean protection from weather and possible enemies. Comparison of the countless methods of building is wellnigh impossible, but I would first offer, as an outstanding example, the intelligence and skill of the termite, or white ant, as it is generally called, which has always excited my great interest, possibly because of the insignificant size of the creature in comparison with the size of its dwelling. The termites are geologically much older than the familiar species of ants, and, from a scientific standpoint, the name " white ant " is incorrect. They are, however, very similar to their relatives, inasmuch as they are social insects and build large communal nests. These insects are widely distributed, some species being found as far away as Southern Europe. It is in Africa, however, that the most wonderful examples of their energy and skill are in evidence, in Tanganyika, Kenya, Uganda, and the Congo their nests being huge compared with

those I have examined in other parts of Africa and Australia.

The Australian nests were of a somewhat different shape, and though large, were not built to so great a height. One African nest I measured was twenty-seven feet in height, and as the termite is approximately one-fifth of an inch in length, if we compare this measurement with the height of its dwelling, we find that, in proportion, man would require to build a skyscraper approximately two miles high in order to achieve an equivalent feat of construction !

The material used by the termite builders is a mixture of decayed wood, excreta and a certain amount of earth, which, when "set" or hardened by exposure, is almost as hard as an English brick. The average height of nests in Tanganyika, Kenya, Uganda, and the Congo is approximately twelve feet, and so strongly are they built that I have watched an enraged rhinoceros frantically trying to demolish one without success. And, what is more, the great beast sustained injuries through impact with the concrete-like material. Furthermore, I have on several occasions used these ant-hills as safety zones when taking refuge from rhino and buffalo. Some of the hills have several cones and down the centre of each is a hole about four inches in diameter, which is sealed prior to the rainy season—a further example of the intelligence of the termite. The sealing up is carried out by the workers during the night hours and the following morning a dark moist patch will indicate the results of their labours. A brief period of exposure to the sun causes the patch to harden and to blend in colour with the rest of the structure, and the same skilled procedure occurs after any repairs or extensions.

In Central Africa the "hills" are used as vantage points by many animal sentries, but the hartebeeste, or

kongoni, are the most frequent users of these valuable "look-out" stations. The "hills" or nests weigh many tons, and sometimes they will be found in colonies, whilst occasionally one encounters a mammoth, isolated one, which serves as a landmark on the plain.

In Central and South Africa the material obtained from demolished ant-hills is extensively used in the construction of hard tennis courts and floors for dwelling houses. Also in South Africa, where the ant-hills are comparatively small, the traveller is often able to construct a very efficient oven by partly excavating a nest so as to provide a fire hole, baking chamber and chimney. Where vegetation is scarce, dried cow-dung is used as fuel, and it is remarkably efficient.

The South African "hills" average only about three feet in height and resemble old-fashioned beehives, but it was in the Transvaal that I encountered what I considered to be the poorest examples in the whole continent. Ants are to be found in greatest numbers at altitudes of between four and five thousand feet above sea-level.

I well remember my first examination of a white ants' nest many years ago, but on a later expedition, when I had Ernesti with me, I happened to be camped on the edge of a burnt-out part of the country, where within a few hundred yards of my tent were quite a number of ant-hills of various sizes, and so on the afternoon of my arrival I had a look at them, and selected one, about six feet high and sixteen feet in circumference at the base, for a closer examination. Early the next morning, Ernesti and I, with a couple of natives, set out armed with pangas and a small pickaxe, but after tackling the surface for a short time, I discovered that, although I was dealing with an ant-hill of comparatively small dimensions, a considerable amount of heavy work in demolition would be necessary before I could satisfy my

curiosity. Moreover, the heat was intense, and there was no shade in the vicinity, for a fire a few weeks back had destroyed all the mimosa trees nearby, leaving nothing *but some charred stumps*. And so, after an hour of arduous labour, I called a halt, and rested on a camp stool, whilst Ernesti squatted on his haunches beside me. There was silence for a few minutes, and then Ernesti, whilst deftly flicking the perspiration from his brow with his forefinger, imparted to me his ideas about ants and ant-hills.

“It is well, Bwana, that we did not try to destroy this dwelling with our hands. If it had not been for these [pointing to the tools we had brought with us] we should have been as babes. Yes, Bwana, these insects are very small, but they are the mightiest of all builders. They learnt to build when this land was young, and they became so skilled that they built houses which defied all the natural enemies of which they knew—the hands of man, the horns of rhino, the tusks of the elephant, the strong wind, and the fire on the ground as well as the fire from the skies [lightning]. Now, Bwana, I have lived in the villages of the white men, and I have seen the white men build large houses of wood, iron, stone and burnt earth of red colour [bricks]. The white men use great magic for building their houses. They use spades, shovels, and picks, large wheels that cut great pieces of timber with much singing, as if they enjoyed their work. Nevertheless, Bwana, I have seen these houses destroyed by great winds, heavy rain, fire, and fire from the skies. And I have also seen such houses destroyed, Bwana, by ants, these little insects we soon will see. Now these insects are small; they have no hands like you and me, and they use no machines of magic. And I say again, Bwana, they are the mightiest of all builders. You have told me, Bwana, that these insects dwell not in your country, and they

therefore did not learn how to build houses that would defy the machines of the white man. It would be well if Bwana told all his countrymen of these wonderful insects, so that they may study their methods and build houses which are stronger and more secure for white people to live in." Rising slowly and stretching himself, he pointed to the charred stumps of the trees, and then towards the ant-hill and said, "Bwana sees that the fire was great, but this house still stands."

I could not help wondering what he would have said about the jerry-builders of Great Britain, if he could have seen some of the rows of little houses which, unfortunately, have sprung up around most of the larger towns.

An examination of the interior of an ant-hill discloses marvels of design and workmanship, for it contains innumerable galleries and passages which are in constant use, while the royal cell and the nurseries, located in the lower part of the structure, are so arranged that an even temperature is maintained in them. In order to study these wonderful insects, one needs great patience and has to be prepared to face many difficulties owing to the intricate design and construction of the nest, the nocturnal habits of the insects and their reaction to changes of light and heat. The royal chamber, the surrounding galleries and the nurseries are built of a material resembling chocolate and greatly differing from the substance of which the main structure is composed. About one and a half cubic feet of this special material is used in the construction of the galleries and cells. Below the royal chamber is a further series of galleries, and a layer of decayed wood or vegetable matter of a yellowish colour, some being caked and some in dry powdery form. Each nest houses, first, the workers, which may be either sex, have sharp jaws capable of attacking all types of wood except such timber as ironwood or jarrah, and are always

barren. Second, the soldiers; which are much larger than the workers and possess enormous heads, armed with well-developed jaws capable of inflicting severe though non-poisonous bites. They are barren and may be of either sex. Third, winged males and females; which frequent the nest at certain periods, and these are the insects which travel abroad to establish other colonies. Fourth, the king and queen, the founders of each colony, which have lost their wings. The queen becomes almost unrecognisable, for her abdomen extends until she attains the extraordinary length of three inches, as compared with her original length of approximately one-fifth of an inch! When the soldiers and workers are gathered round the queen, the contrast is extraordinary, as it is only her abdomen that extends, her head and the rest of her body retaining their original dimensions. Some writers say the queen remains motionless when in her cell, but I have always noted a slight, perpetual motion of the abdomen, to which I attribute the presence of the groove in which she reclines, the cell originally having no such groove. This continuous movement resembles in some ways that of the swallow-tail caterpillar just before it enters the chrysalis stage. The body of the queen-ant is shiny and, at times, almost transparent. Once she has taken her place in the royal apartment she remains there until death, and it is to the lack of exercise thus imposed that some naturalists attribute her immense corpulence. She is extremely fertile and is credited with producing one egg per second, and she is fed by certain of the workers and always guarded by soldiers. Unfortunately, the various queens I examined quickly showed signs of distress when exposed to the open air, notwithstanding the care taken to protect them whilst I carried out my investigations. I failed to discover a queen which exceeded three inches

in length, and the average girth of the abdomen was approximately two inches. The royal cell is well below ground level, sometimes twelve inches deep, and surrounding it is a kind of tunnel, containing numerous outlets to facilitate the passage of the workers, which travel to and fro, conveying the royal eggs to the numerous nurseries.

I have never found more than one queen in a nest, although I have examined a large number during my travels. The royal cells, however, have varied in size to an appreciable extent and the general design is by no means standardised. The king resembles the soldier termite in form, except that parts of his head and body differ slightly, and he is smaller. Like the queen, he, too, has the advantage of possessing eyes. In view of the accuracy and speed with which the workers and the soldiers perform their duties, it comes as a distinct shock to find they are totally blind. Even so, they are sensitive to light rays, and prefer to work in complete darkness. For this reason, they construct neat tunnel shelters over any exposed surface they wish to attack.

At certain periods the winged members of the termite community take flight, and swarm about in millions in large towns, such as Durban, where they are known as "flying ants". Their wing-joints are easily broken, so that when the insects alight, or collide with any object, the wings fall off. This results in myriads of wingless insects crawling on the ground and being trampled to death by pedestrians. Electric tramcar wheels crush large numbers of them, and, as a result, the lines soon become too greasy for the brakes to act efficiently, and so sand and grit is thrown down to maintain the services. Very few of the winged termites survive, for they fall an easy prey to birds, animals, other insects and human beings. The comparatively few survivors usually be-

come founders of new colonies. After a shower of rain on the Serengeti Plains I saw a flight of many thousands of them, reminding me of the dreaded locust swarms I had seen in other parts of Africa.

In districts where these termites have their homes, the traveller will occasionally discover the trunks and branches of nearby trees covered with semicircular tunnels which are constructed of material similar to that of the nests, and invariably lead to a food storage chamber. The termite lives mainly on wood, and any building or other erection, constructed of wood and within easy reach, is subject to its depredations; and total collapse frequently follows an attack. Wooden floors, tables, chairs, fence posts, telegraph poles and even railway sleepers are quickly destroyed by these destructive insects. Furthermore, a wooden floor standing even two or three feet above ground-level is by no means immune, as the termite quickly raises a mound by which he is able to reach it, or else he constructs a covered tunnel along the supporting brick or stonework to serve the same purpose. The attack is carried out *internally*, so that after a few weeks the householder may suddenly discover his apparently sturdy-looking floor-boards have been reduced to thin hollow shells, whilst the chairs, tables, cupboards and other articles of furniture have been similarly reduced to a state of ruin. During the Great War a large quantity of stores was unloaded from trucks during the night near the Voi railway station; and as the Battalion was preparing to leave next morning, I observed a soldier in the act of picking up one of the wooden boxes which contained tinned foodstuffs. He grasped the sides of the box and lifted it up, but the contents remained on the ground, still neatly stacked! The expression of blank surprise on his face was, needless to say, extremely comical. The bottom of the box had,

of course, been completely eaten away by termites during the night. Owing to the destructive activities of the termite in Uganda and Kenya, iron instead of wood is now used for sleepers on the railway track.

A few days later, whilst in camp, I overheard a rather humorous conversation, for two officers had been attacked by jigger-fleas, which are close relations of the common flea, and resemble it too. The female has an awkward habit of burrowing into the flesh without one being aware of the fact, and usually attacks either the fingers or the toes. As soon as she has settled down in her new abode, her abdomen, which contains the egg sack, begins to swell rapidly, until it reaches the size of an ordinary green pea. During this process intense itching is suffered by the victim, which soon becomes unbearable. The natives are experts in dealing with the pests and quickly manage to extract them with the aid of a needle or a thorn, but an inexperienced person invariably ends up by breaking the egg sac, and when this occurs the eggs enter the blood stream, with the result that swellings soon make their appearance, glands become affected, and occasionally amputation of the limb is necessary to save the sufferer's life! Whilst watching a fellow-officer undergoing the unpleasant operation of flea-extraction, a friend of mine who had lost a leg below the knee during the Boer War, laughingly remarked, "Thank God I've only got one foot to be attacked!" The sufferer retorted, rather solemnly, "Yes, old man, but what about the white ants?"

Let me, however, revert to the investigations I was carrying out with Ernesti. No sooner had I demolished a section of the ant-hill to examine the interior, than the work of reconstruction by the inhabitants of the "hill" began! Soldiers carried out a preliminary survey, and before long the workers arrived. Each of the latter

carried a supply of moist material which was quickly laid in position, and on completion of this operation it promptly returned for another load. Each layer was pressed down to render the structure solid, and occasionally a worker would repeat the process of pressing on any part about which it had its doubts. Whilst this repair work proceeded, the workers were under the supervision of the soldiers, which, incidentally, form approximately two per cent. of the population of the nest. The latter paraded backwards and forwards, and it was wellnigh impossible to believe that both soldiers and workers were completely blind. A hole nine inches by nine inches was completely refilled in thirty minutes, which will vividly convey the speed with which the termite works.

Human beings, animals, and birds are not attacked by the termite, and it is incorrect to think that they are feared either by the white man or the native for physical reasons. Their destructive attacks on wood in any form are the sole reason why they are dreaded, and recent experiments have shown that poison gas provides a ready means for their destruction.

When the termites are attacked by black or red ants, a lengthy battle ensues, and the wonderful organising skill of the combatants is soon displayed. The fighters can be clearly seen in mortal combat, whilst special units are busily engaged removing the dead and wounded. The black and red ants are carnivorous and wage war for the purpose of obtaining victims for food; and while on the subject of eating ants I may add that in Uganda termites are considered a great delicacy by the natives. They are collected by means of a simple trick, and in the Kampala district numerous termite traps can be seen. These are very ingenious, though simple in form, being constructed and operated in the following manner.

The "hill" is enclosed by a bamboo framework over which broad leaves or matting are spread, on the approach of rain. In the absence of rain, the native trappers imitate the pattering of the water by gently tapping the covering, and it is soon swarming with workers, which the trappers quickly sweep into a suitable vessel and eat them either raw or cooked. The natives of Kenya, however, are not ant-eaters, a curious belief prevailing among the Wakamba that man originated from the termite! When a queen dies, the "hill" is promptly deserted by the ants, and is taken over as a ready-made home by snakes, or small creatures such as the dwarf mongoose.

George Outram, one of the most expert and well-known of African big-game hunters, informed me that on one occasion a hunted python sought refuge in an ant-hill. It entered one opening, and its head soon appeared out of another. Still anxious for its safety, the reptile turned its head into a third hole. Whilst this was happening, the main part of its body was still exposed, with the result that the threading manœuvres produced the effect of an ant-hill literally alive with large serpents!

Many species of ants are to be found in Africa, and one which is common in Natal is known locally as "the Cock-Tail Ant", because its weapon of offence and protection is very similar to that of the wasp—the rear part of its body being always carried in a raised position so that the sting can be plunged into a victim without delay. These insects are slightly larger than the termite workers, and very aggressive. Woe betide anyone who is bold or stupid enough to seat himself on the ground or on a tree branch occupied by cock-tail ants, for they rapidly swarm on to an intruder, and the result is quite as painful as an attack by a swarm of bees. Strangely enough, they build their nests on trees from ten to thirty feet above

the ground, and construct them of material somewhat similar to that used by the termites, but the nests are much smaller, and rather oval in shape, the diameter being from nine to twelve inches and the height from fifteen to twenty inches. Yet another species is known as the Driver Ant, which is dreaded by white men and natives alike, for when these creatures are on the march nothing short of poison gas or fire can stop them, and if, for instance, a human dwelling lies in their path, it is wise for the occupants to vacate the premises until the insects have passed through or by it. On one occasion, I remember an army of these ants taking three days and nights to pass by my tent, and if it had been pitched directly in their path the whole of my food supply would have disappeared! Any living creature which refuses them the right of way is doomed, as was proved once when a settler chained his dog under his wooden building which rested on piers well above the ground. During the night a small army of driver ants passed by, and next morning the settler was horrified to find only the *skeleton* of his poor dog remaining to tell the tale! Once, marching through a forest, my porters were attacked by these aggressive insects. I happened to be about twenty yards behind, and realised something was wrong when the men suddenly threw down their loads, and after running for a short distance, began to tear off their scanty clothing, dancing vigorously all the time. When I began to approach them, they waved me back, but I foolishly ignored their warning, and soon discovered a swarm of large, black, fierce-looking ants rushing about as if seeking further victims. They seemed to be particularly angry and were making a curious hissing noise as they moved. I watched an attack being launched on one of our discarded loads, and whilst wondering what I could do about it, I realised the insects had attacked me, and I joined in the

porters' frantic dance, losing no time in vacating the spot and ridding myself of my unwelcome visitors. Even after their bodies had been brushed off, the jaws of many of the ants were still grasping my skin, and the poison they had injected caused great pain. Consequently, we had no option but to keep clear of the place until the army had disappeared. It was my first experience of the kind, and provided the porters with a great deal of amusement at my expense, their wounds being far less serious than mine.

On two occasions only have I had the pleasure of eating ants' honey, dug out of a nest in the ground, the entrance to which was a very small hole, which gave no indication that some twelve inches below lay stored a supply of very sweet and delicious honey.

Whilst in the Congo forests, I saw a number of particularly attractive nests which had been constructed by yet another species. They were not large, being about thirty inches in height and fourteen inches in diameter, but each nest was intricately designed in tiers, a masterpiece of architecture.

Nowhere in the world can be found anything to equal the dexterity and the industriousness of ants of all species, and yet even their wonderful constructional achievements by no means represent all the building genius in the world of Nature. There is, for example, the extraordinary work of the beaver, and although it has already been mentioned in the chapter, "Nature Did it First", it must obviously find a place in this survey of Nature's architecture.

The beaver and its dam, which I studied both in Canada and America, provide another excellent example of erecting "homes without hands". The beaver is a highly-skilled and marvellous workman, being able to swim quickly with its hind feet and using its fore feet for carrying and building and also for conveying food to its

mouth. It is a most difficult creature to photograph in its natural state, owing to its nocturnal habits; and, as a matter of fact, most of my photographs had to be taken late in the evening and were thus so under-exposed that it was impossible to reproduce them. On the other hand, many pictures have been taken of tame beavers or those in captivity, and I remember seeing a pair at work in a huge enclosure in New York. A few months afterwards I happened to be sitting in a London cinema when a film of the beaver was exhibited, and I recognised the background as that of the Bronx Zoo. A gentleman sitting next to me was telling his companion what a remarkable photographic achievement it was, for he knew the nocturnal habits of beavers! This remark irritated me very much in view of my laborious efforts, and so I said, "Excuse me, those pictures were taken in the New York Zoo." He was, of course, dumbfounded.

However, watching beavers, even in half light, whilst I was trying to photograph them, was sufficient recompense for the many hours I spent in a cramped position in my hide-up. I found one dam high up in the American Rockies, miles away from any other dam, and I could not help wondering how, despite the fact that at certain seasons they travel great distances, these little fellows had journeyed to such remote heights. Water is an absolute necessity for the beaver's home, and the supply should never fail; but it is gifted with an instinct which tells it how to keep the water at the same level.

The beaver constructed dams long before man realised their possibilities and usefulness, and it gives great thought and care to its selection of a site. The flow of water, its depth and the proximity of suitable trees are important factors. Having decided to commence operations, it faces the selected tree in an upright sitting position, and with its chisel-like teeth cuts a groove round the trunk.

This is gradually widened in such a manner that the tree will fall in the required direction with almost mathematical accuracy. The chosen trunk and branches are then divided into lengths of from three to four feet, the logs thus obtained being hauled or carried into position, where they are held down by a covering of mud and stones. In due course, the flow of water is retarded, and its level begins to rise. The process of building continues, however, and the beaver is frequently helped in its labours by logs and branches which have floated downstream. Throughout, the animal displays great skill and energy, for some of the logs used are so large and heavy that the casual observer might be excused if he regarded them as too bulky and weighty for manipulation by so small a creature. An important point, however, is that the beaver is intelligent enough to know how to profit by the specific gravity of the timber, and so he transports the heavies logs *by water*. The construction of the barricade calls for the use of an enormous quantity of mud, to which dry earth is added, and in due course the whole dam becomes an almost solid structure. I have carefully examined dams varying from seventy-five to a hundred and twenty feet across and from five to seven feet in total height. In thickness they varied from five to seven feet at the base, tapering to about four feet at the top. On completion, the beaver immediately sets to work in a similar manner to construct a reserve dam about two feet high, the purpose of which is to provide a safeguard against flood water destroying the foundations of the main barricade. The hut or lodge is usually located near the middle of the main dam, the entrance being well below water-level, to obviate blockage by ice, and all the bark which has been stripped from the logs and branches is stored in the lodge to provide food for the winter. Occasionally it happens that some of the smaller branches, used for binding pur-

poses in the dam, take root in the mud, and trees which originate in this manner eventually form an added food reserve, whilst also tending to add strength to the structure. The lodges are circular in form and domed, the top of the dome being about six feet above water-level. The interior of the lodge has a diameter of from six to seven feet, and the internal height of the dome above water-level is about three feet. Consequently, the wall of the lodge is of considerable thickness and very strong, and its security is assured by frequent additions of small branches and mud. During the winter the walls are as hard as stone.

The beaver sleeps on a bunk or bed which is attached to and follows the line of the wall, and the lodge floor is covered with small chips of wood, grass and soft bark. The beaver usually sleeps in such a position that his tail is slightly immersed in the water, so that, if the level recedes, he may receive warning that something is amiss with the dam. In an effort to compel the beavers to show themselves, I made an opening about three feet wide and twelve inches deep in the middle of the dam, and took up my position in a "hide-up" to watch the result. Nothing happened, however, and I later came to the conclusion that the wily creatures had been watching me. By the next morning, however, effective repairs had been completed! In the process of opening up the dam I unintentionally dislodged a piece of timber about four feet long and four inches in diameter, which I carefully tried to replace, but my efforts were of no avail, for the log would not stay under water. Time and again it bobbed up, and I was compelled to leave it floating about. The beaver, however, was much cleverer than I, for the next morning the log had been firmly replaced in its position at the dam base! I have never been able to ascertain how this difficult work was accomplished.



THE GRACEFUL KUDU WITH HER YOUNG



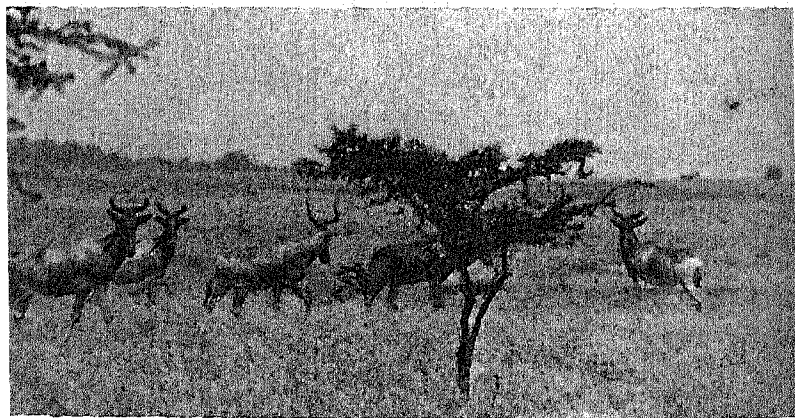
A CHARGING RHINO IS A TERRIFYING SIGHT



THE FORK-TAILED KITE IS A GENIUS AT AEROBATICS



A LARGE FLOCK OF VULTURES—SCAVENGERS OF JUNGLE AND PLAIN



In my opinion, it is impossible to justify the killing of these inoffensive and extremely intelligent creatures for commercial gain, and when I consider how for years the beavers have been hunted by men armed with devilish traps I begin seriously to doubt the superiority of the human race over the highly skilled, patient and beautiful creatures of Nature.

Quite another type of builder is the Weaver Bird, common in many parts of Africa, South-Eastern Asia, India, Java, Ceylon, and Australia. The greatest variety of weaver birds is, however, to be found in Central and South-Eastern Africa, and those to which I am going to refer are, in my opinion, the master-builders of the feathered world. The nest they make is retort-shaped and is constructed of grasses, woven in and out with the same skilled accuracy as is required in the manufacture of cloth. Both sexes share in the work of weaving, and their efforts produce a home which is both distinctive in style and very handsome. The spherical part, or nest, is usually from five to seven inches in diameter, and the tubular or lower part of the structure varies from two to three inches in diameter and from seven to ten inches in length. The top of the nest is usually secured by carefully tied grasses to the tip of a tree branch or to a bamboo tree to obviate the possibility of snakes or other enemies gaining access. The tube is always pointed downwards, so that the bird is compelled to run up or down the whole length of the tube when entering or emerging from the nest. It is fascinating to watch a weaver bird at work, and to see how a long and strong blade of grass is cut to the required length with its beak and speedily conveyed to the selected branch. One end of the grass is passed twice round the branch and threaded through to form a secure knot. The bird then hangs upside down by one claw and uses its beak and remaining claw

to complete the tying up of the other end of the grass blade. A loop is thus formed in which the builder can rest securely on its back whilst manipulating further blades of grass. Having tested the security of the first loop by pressing against it with its back, the bird works with such vigour and skill that after a few hours a beautiful green nest is formed, which, after a few days' exposure to the sun, turns brown.

While I was examining one of these beautiful nests with the aid of Ernesti, he said, "Bwana, the thing which we now see speaks of great skill, which is the child of hard work and patience. Skill is not the gift of God. I have seen a man do with one hand that which I have failed to do with my two hands; he was a good son. Laziness and dishonesty have many children, but they are all evil like their parents. Such are the parents of the monkey tribes, for, as you know, Bwana, they are cunning thieves and very lazy. Bwana knows that the white ant is the mightiest of all builders, and that insect has no hands, but limbs which are so small that they are difficult for man to see. You and I, Bwana, have two hands, and we build houses that shelter us from the weather and our enemies. The little bird which built this has but a small beak and little claws, yet his work provides him and his family with comfort and is good to look at.

"Now the monkey and his big brothers have four hands, but they are lazy. Therefore, Bwana, monkeys build no houses to shelter them and their little ones from the weather and their enemies, and even their big brothers make nests which are so poor that the hyena and jackal laugh at them. When food is scarce, monkeys are too lazy to seek it in other forests where there may be abundance, but steal the fruit and crops of the nearby white and native farmers. Yes, Bwana, these creatures spend

much time speaking evil (gossiping), for laziness and dishonesty are their parents."

Many a time as I sat in the shade of my tent verandah, enjoying a beautiful scene, or perhaps watching weaver birds at work, my mind has recalled many of the creatures I have studied, not only in Africa, but in other parts of the world, all equally clever in the making of wonderful homes without the aid of hands.

The platypus of Australia, for example, looks very ill-equipped for burrowing, and yet it is so expert that it can dig a burrow ranging from fifteen to thirty feet in length, in hard soil, in a surprisingly short space of time. One opening is below water-level to enable it to avoid possible enemies and to emerge from the water without being seen, whilst the other allows entrance and exit above water-level. In one section of the burrow is a chamber in which the young are hatched from eggs, enclosed in non-calcareous shells, and carefully reared. The young are born without hair and are blind, and, although they are unable to suck, they lap up the milk which exudes from bare patches on the mother's body where her breasts would normally be. This strange creature has webbed feet, and a soft bill shaped like a duck's. Indeed, it is sometimes referred to as the duck-mole, or duck-bill. The male can be identified by a horny spur on each hind foot, the spur being equipped with a poison gland.

Another clever builder and decorator is the bower bird, a native of Australia, which I have previously referred to. It is undoubtedly the leading "artist" of the feathered world, for it not only constructs a playhouse but decorates it in a most attractive style. The paint consists of charred wood mixed with saliva, whilst shells, coloured paper and various oddments are used with good effect to decorate the front of the bower. Nearer

home, the handsome abodes of the chaffinch and the long-tailed tit are usually constructed of lichens and moss, neatly interlaced with spiders' webs and wool, providing excellent examples of weaving without the aid of shuttle and loom. Sand-martins and kingfishers are skilled in excavation work too, and seem to experience little difficulty in forming a tunnel four feet in length and two inches in diameter, which slopes upwards to the nest chamber, to ensure proper drainage.

The dipper, which haunts mountain streams, constructs a large dome-shaped nest which is usually attached to a rock behind a small waterfall. The bird has thus to fly through the falling water when going to or leaving the nest. The house-martin, the thrush, the nuthatches of Britain and the horn-bills of Borneo are all expert plasterers, whilst rooks, whitethroats, jays, reed-warblers and many other British birds are expert at basket-making.

In my Surrey garden is the home or "earth" of a fox, which has been occupied and cleaned out each season for forty years to my knowledge. All these furred and feathered creatures, including the rabbit too, of course, are but a few of those I could name possessing the wonderful faculty of making homes without hands.

The love of home lies deep in the hearts of all living things, whether human or animal, and it is this urge to create and preserve a private domain, however humble, which fires Nature's creatures. And the ingenious constructions which reveal the talents with which animals have been endowed should make men pause and ponder, for it is by no means a foregone conclusion that the human race possesses a monopoly of reasoning powers and ability. Indeed, many of Nature's creatures have achieved far greater and more lasting feats than man, who, alas, divides his time between feverish creation and equally frantic destruction. Undoubtedly, it is in the

realm of architecture and construction that animals and birds excel, and their varied homes and nests, unlike the human equivalents, never create discordant sights, but blend in with the general scheme of nature. Just as when one is faced with the noblest architectural achievements of man, whether in the form of great cathedrals, or humble yet perfectly designed cottages, one remembers Schelling's vivid words, "Architecture is frozen music", so one feels equal admiration for the artistic and amazingly ingenious homes of these creatures which possess none of man's mechanical devices to aid them in their work.

CHAPTER IX

CONCERNING BIRDS

"Proof they give, too, of primal powers,
Of a prescience more than ours,
Teach us, while they come and go,
When to sail and when to sow."

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

THE revolutionary change from civilised life to the simplicity of camping in Africa, surrounded by superb scenery, natives near to Nature and a veritable world of animals and birds, is something never to be forgotten. I well remember, on my first visit, how that keen naturalist, Sir Frederick Jackson, then Governor of Kenya, said to me, just as I arrived in Nairobi, "Take my advice, Kearton, and only go on safari for a few days, for by then you will find out what is missing, so that when you eventually get away for several weeks, you will know what to expect." Never have I had better advice, for it gave me knowledge that proved invaluable. I think Sir Frederick was the finest naturalist Kenya has ever known, especially on bird life, his book being a standard work on that country. Everybody, including myself, who goes to Central Africa raves about the game, but it is indeed unfortunate that the people of the British Isles do not take much interest in films of tropical birds. For instance, on my first expedition I spent a great deal of time in hide-ups obtaining photographs of big and small birds, and some of the time was spent under very dangerous conditions, and yet when the results reached the screen, the public took only a lukewarm interest in them! This apathy is largely attributable to ignorance on the

part of those who have not been in a position to travel. Take the buffalo as an example. A herd of buffalo on the screen looks very much like a herd of cattle grazing in an English field, and therefore excites little interest; but if the people looking at it had had some of the hair-raising experiences which have befallen me, they would sit up and take notice, for the buffalo is in the first rank of highly dangerous animals. However, one cannot blame people for this, because the most exciting adventures naturally cannot be filmed by oneself whilst they are happening, and only first-hand experience brings realisation of the hazards of wild animal photography. No doubt, Hollywood, employing every kind of camera trick, can create illusions of danger, but they are highly artificial, and such tactics are quite impossible in the heart of Africa, especially with a herd of buffalo. Sometimes people have told me of wonderful escapes they have seen at the cinema, such as a tiger chasing a man up a tree, and so on, until I asked, "Where do you think the photographer was, and why should the tiger try to get at the man up the tree when it could easily have got the cameraman who was not ten yards away?" It rarely strikes people that somebody else must always be there taking the film !

One of the first birds to attract my attention was the fork-tailed kite, which, in my early photographic days, I tried hard to secure in Wales, where one of the last pairs in the British Isles were struggling for existence. Watching one of these kites swoop gracefully down and pick up a bit of meat near the porters' tents, I thought of the tragedy of these wonderful scavengers, for in the 16th century they had been one of the great sights of London, scavenging then in just the same way, flying around London Bridge, to the astonishment of travellers from other countries visiting England, and most useful in those

far-off days, since they ate almost anything. Smoking outside my tent, I have sat for hours studying the wonderful flight of the kite, its fork-tail serving as a rudder as it circled and manoeuvred for a position, hovering, gliding, banking and diving, in expert acrobatic fashion. No other bird I know makes such use of its tail, or can equal the kite in what to-day might be called aerobatics. Other birds, such as the albatross, are, of course, marvellous flyers and gliders, but their performances are more straightforward. The vulture, another scavenger, is very clumsy in flight as compared with the kite, although once on the wing and high in the heavens, it becomes a perfect glider. For hours it will circle, soaring high in the sky beyond the sight of man, until a signal is given that there is a kill below, and then down it comes, in ever-narrowing circles. After feasting, I have known vultures to experience great difficulty in rising. Ordinarily, they have to make a short run, like an aeroplane taking off, but when heavy with food, they need to run a long way before rising, and, as I have said, sometimes they don't rise at all ! When this happened, one of my boys would chase the vulture, which at once unloaded, and then, after a short run, rose skywards without effort. Observing that there were different species of vultures around me, I decided to study them at close quarters, and so early each morning—just before daybreak—I set out to watch them, being extremely keen to learn exactly how they discover the whereabouts of the remains of a lion's kill. At first, I thought it was by sight, and then I had a shock when I found a crowd of vultures fighting over a kill just *before* daybreak. My subsequent observations, however, led me to believe that sight was the chief, though not the only, sense employed. Many travellers have spent long periods seeking to discover the vulture's method of locating kills, and many naturalists have dis-

puted the sight theory, whilst others have denied its keen sense of smell. It is interesting here to quote Longfellow's lines on the ways of vultures:

" But another Vulture, watching
From his high aerial look-out,
Sees the downward plunge, and follows;
And a third pursues the second,
Coming from the invisible ether,
First a speck, and then a Vulture,
Till the air is dark with pinions."

Apart from my own extensive experiences in desert and jungle, I have known many famous hunters with varying views about the tactics of vultures. It is, of course, unwise to be dogmatic about these matters, for the behaviour of an animal or bird at any moment may entirely upset one's preconceived notions; and yet every hunter I have met agrees that vultures hunt by sight. Despite this, Waterton wrote an article on the " Faculty of Scent in the Vulture ", declaring that from his observations he was satisfied that vultures are directed to their food by their olfactory nerves coming in contact with the smell of decaying animals, and he proceeds to argue that a current of air from the Trade Winds in the Tropics carries such smells. Unfortunately for his thesis, I have never known an animal to lie long enough in the Tropics to have even the suggestion of smell, save in war, when the vultures never touched the carcasses, possibly because they were horses and cattle which had died from the Tsetse Fly. I also remember seeing, many years ago, in the Masai country, a number of dead cattle untouched by vultures, which had died from rinderpest. Another experienced naturalist, C. J. Anderson, in South-West Africa, came to the conclusion that vultures hunt by sight as well as by scent, though depending more upon the former. Sir John Kirk gave it as his opinion that vultures depend on sight, and supported his belief by

citing the fact that when a dead animal was covered with foliage, it was left untouched. Of course, the scent advocate will contend it was not left long enough to decay and smell, and so the debate goes on. Canon Tristram, an authority on the Sahara, describes an occasion when a camel was killed, and says, "It was not until the next morning that a vulture scented, or rather descried, his prey"; and he adds, "That the vulture uses the organ of sight rather than that of smell seems to be certain, from the immense height at which he soars and gyrates in the air." That, in my opinion, is a very good description and puts the matter in a nutshell, because that particular camel was quite fresh meat, so that the question of scent did not arise. On the other hand, I have seen a camel, dead for a week, untouched! In Central Africa, however, a dead animal is never permitted time to decompose, and I recall an instance where a rhino was killed in the morning and by night only the bones were left; and that occurred to an animal weighing two tons! Often, when marching along just after daybreak, I have seen a spot appear in the clear sky, soaring in a circle, followed by another, and another, until perhaps a dozen vultures were descending in ever-narrowing circles towards the earth. Meanwhile, the first has dropped, and in less than half an hour, forty or fifty are to be seen at the kill, fighting and tearing the carcass to pieces. Late arrivals glide down and watch the scene from the outskirts of the ferocious crowd, in company with marabout storks, fork-tail kites and sometimes an eagle or two—the storks and kites snapping up any pieces dropped by the fighting vultures. Once, I filmed them feeding on a big animal, and all that can be seen on the screen is a seething mass of feathers, wings and beaks.

Feathers are always flying in every direction during such feasts, because vultures use their wings as well as

their beaks in attacking each other. The poor old marabout stork is a harmless, solemn-looking bird, and as he watches these fights, he resembles an aged philosopher pondering over the follies of others, but if one piece of meat happens to be dropped by the fighting birds he secures it in two quick strides ! Often, when watching these scenes from a hide-up, I have likened the marabout storks to humans, profiting by the greed of others. On another day just after daybreak, I managed to secure a film of a most curious scene, for, as I was marching along, I suddenly encountered several hyenas and jackals at a lion's kill, and so, quickly taking advantage of a nearby bush for cover, which I hollowed out, I managed to conceal myself and my camera. Within a few moments two jackals came back, whilst a hyena regarded the bush very suspiciously, and when the jackals started to feed again, the light was still too poor for filming. Five minutes later, I heard the "whoof-whoof" of vultures' wings as they passed over my bush, and dropped on the edge of the kill. One jackal managed to get a piece of meat whilst the other was feeding. By now the light was rapidly improving, and as more vultures arrived, they stood in a half circle watching the remaining jackal. I filmed that scene, and at that moment one big vulture ventured to approach the opposite end of the kill. This was too much for the jackal, who rushed round to keep it off, but as he was doing so, two other vultures rushed in at the end he had vacated, after which the business resolved itself into a frantic chase by the jackal from one end of the kill to the other—a highly amusing picture of a grim affair. Finally, the jackal saw his efforts were useless, for the vultures were too numerous, and so, like a sensible animal, he chewed a piece off and went away, leaving the winged scavengers to their feast.

I was asked recently if I believed that vultures, while

soaring round and round out of sight of the human eye, slept on the wing ! When I said I did not, I was told of an occasion when an aeroplane had crashed into a vulture. This surprised me, for a vulture would naturally hear the unusual sound of a plane's engines, but I stuck to my point, for it has twelve hours of darkness in which to sleep.

CHAPTER X

BIG-GAME HUNTERS I HAVE KNOWN

"I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more is none."

SHAKESPEARE: *Macbeth*.

IN the course of my lifetime I have known most of the Big-Game Hunters, and I have mentally divided them into three groups. First, there are the professionals, who, in the early days, made their money by killing elephants for their ivory, sometimes on licence and sometimes by poaching in the Congo. Later, when they gave up elephant poaching, some of these men used to escort sportsmen on hunting parties, while others became Game Rangers. Second, there are the Museum collectors; and third, the sportsmen, many of whom have recorded their experiences in books, which make amazing reading. Naturally, I can mention only a few of the many I have known.

There is, or used to be, a Big-Game Hunters' Club in New York, the membership qualification being that an applicant must at some time or other have killed either an elephant, a lion, a rhino, or a buffalo—a feat which certainly gave anyone a claim to be a big-game hunter; but in these days in England a man who has been in Africa and has possibly shot a harmless gazelle is hailed by the newspapers on his return as "Mr. So-and-so, the intrepid *big-game hunter and explorer*!"

The same kind of exaggeration occurs also in regard to some of the film producers and their pictures for the screen. Only a short time ago, a film unit was supposed to be working in country where there was no water, and

harrowing details were given of its experiences; and yet in fact a big river ran close by the place where the picture was made, only a few miles from one of the largest towns in South Africa ! Another film released quite recently gave fantastic details suggesting that the unit had undergone terrible sufferings and had been in danger of starvation; and yet it was only a few miles from a railway ! We hold our hands up in horror at German methods of publicity and exaggeration. But in peace as well as in war there seems to be a great lack of truth these days; and if one says anything by way of exposing the falseness of the statements made, the usual reply is, "What's it matter so long as it does no one any harm ?"

However, regarding all the big-game hunters I have known, I am glad to say that I have never yet had any reason to doubt the accuracy of their stories. It used to be said that the average life of big-game hunters was seven years from the time they started killing. Hunting in early days was, apparently, not nearly so dangerous as it is to-day, for then the animals suspected no danger from man; but, on the other hand, the firearms used then were not so effective as modern weapons. To-day, however, elephant, lion and buffalo, instead of running away, as they used to do, now charge at the sound of a shot.

Time, wealth and position played no part in the lives of many of the brave souls I knew in the early days. They were splendid types of the freedom-loving man of the wilds, who takes his life in his hands, knowing that some unlucky day fate is almost sure to play him a shabby trick. When the call came and they lay helpless, knowing the end to be near, they never complained, but died as bravely as they had lived. I have been privileged to hear of the marvellous encounters and escapes from death many of these famous hunters had,

and what volumes of adventure could be written about their "luck" on missing death so frequently! Some of them seemed to have charmed lives, until, at last, the moment arrived when their so-called luck deserted them. It is often said of a man who has escaped death many times on the field of battle, that his luck suddenly deserted him, and this factor of luck is to be found in all walks of life. But the difference in the case of the hunter is that he goes looking for trouble, so that when defeat overtakes him in the end, it is, as one might say, because he has been asking for it.

Very rarely does a hunter continue his calling once he has been mauled, especially if it was by a lion; and it is very strange how often the unfortunate victim is reminded of his experience every year at about the same time as it happened. As a rule septic trouble sets in, and in some cases it proves fatal. Wounds from both lion and leopard are dangerous because their claws are sheathed after feeding, and as a result often carry poisonous microbes. Sometimes a man may receive only a scratch, and yet within forty-eight hours he is dead. When recording the spearing of man-eating lion by nine Masai, during a period of five weeks in which they accounted for five, every one of the natives was mauled, and yet all recovered within a few days; whereas if a white man had been mauled in the same way, he would certainly have died. Although I was in the thick of it all the time, I was the only one lucky enough to escape.

I have known more than one man lose an arm in an encounter with an elephant or a rhino, and yet live. Contrary to general belief, a lion does not worry his victim, but gives just one bite—unless the man struggles or the lion is a man-eater. If the victim attempts to fight, he is kept down, and then the further damage is done, which often proves fatal. Quite a number of men

have escaped by keeping perfectly still—either exerting remarkable strength of will or being in a condition which compelled them to wait and see what the lion's next move would be. If there are several in the party, the lion, having got his man down, will leave him at once in order to face the further dangers he feels are threatening him from the others.

I have often re-read that famous work, "The Man-Eaters of Tsavo", by Colonel Patterson, who gave me good advice before I first went out. His book was specially interesting to me, as I happen to know the two men who were left in the railway carriage, when a third member of their party had been taken through the window by a man-eating lion! A man-eater can be very crafty and bold, especially after he has killed a few adults, but, as I observed, he often turns cowardly when faced by a number of men; then one sees him at his worst, for he won't give fight for a while. In the end, having furiously lashed his tail, coughed ominously and made other nerve-shattering noises intended to frighten, he will really charge. I have known a man-eater make a determined charge; and when within fifteen yards of trouble, change its mind and bolt away for fifty yards; and then it would suddenly turn round, and, usually roaring, lie down flat on the ground, only to get up again and stand tearing up the earth with its front feet. Then it would drop into a crouching position, and that is the attitude to watch for and guard against, for it will suddenly charge and this time press home its attack. I am speaking of occasions on which I was with the Masai, when so quick were the lion's actions that I have seen three men down in almost as many seconds. Colonel Roosevelt told me of a fight he saw with the Nandi tribe, and he gave the time of the actual fight as twelve to fourteen seconds, whilst I timed one of my films showing a

fight with a man-eater and I found it took exactly fourteen seconds. I am referring to *real* man-eaters, and I venture to claim that I have the only moving-picture record in existence of man-eating lions being speared by the Masai—a record filmed as far back as 1910, when the country was young, and the life really wild. A fine tame young lion I knew, kept by a woman near Nairobi, was used by a film party in trying to imitate this feat, but the attempt was not a success, for the lion would not fight, though, it is sad to record, it was killed all the same. For sheer cruelty I cannot think of a more glaring example, the thing being done solely to make money, and I consider it a blot on civilisation.

As a rule, lions are not nearly so brave when there are a number of them together. My friend Jimmy Clark once found himself almost surrounded by a pride of sixteen to eighteen lions in fairly long grass; they had evidently been sleeping and he had got amongst them before they woke up. However, he possessed the nerve to stand perfectly still whilst the lions popped up their heads above the grass on every side, grunting at him, and, though in such big numbers, they did not dare attack him. Just as with sheep when one starts to move off the others feel they must follow, so it is with lions; I think fear takes hold of them. Jimmy Clark himself was naturally very much shaken by his experience and returned to Nairobi; and when he told me about it over luncheon the next day, I thought it was too good a chance to be missed, and so we arranged to go down by luggage train that evening, the lions being quite close to the railway. We arrived at the spot about midnight, and, the driver stopping the train, we were put down in the wide open spaces in the darkness. At first we decided, before camping, to go towards the place where he had seen the lions, but, when the train had wound its way round a

small hill and disappeared from sight, things seemed to alter, and we were not nearly so cheerful as we stumbled along in the dark, so that when the headman of the porters suggested we should camp, we readily gave in and agreed. The next morning we rose early, and went in search of the lions, but instead, as I have recorded in "Wild Life Across the World", we ran into two rhinos which immediately attacked us, and gave us all the excitement we were looking for; but the saddest part of it all was that, as generally happens, the camera was on the back of a porter who had bolted, so the adventure was never recorded. Later on that day, after marching some distance, we got on the track of the lions, but they were on the move. I saw several, about three-quarters of a mile away, through my glasses, and finally we encountered a Masai leaning on his spear, watching a large herd of cattle. When I enquired if he had seen the lions, he did not alter his leaning position, with one foot up resting on the calf of his leg, but merely nodded his head towards the side of a small hill and said, "Yes, several passed along there a few minutes ago," the distance indicated being barely three hundred yards away, and he might as well have been talking about a fox, so very unconcerned did he seem.

One great character I knew, and a professional hunter, was Fritz Schindler, an Austrian of noble family, who, by some means, had made Central Africa his home. He had seventy lions to his bag, excluding other big game, and it was he who took out Mr. Barclay, the banker, and during the trip caught a couple of lion cubs which eventually found their way to a chicken wire enclosure somewhere in Norfolk. These two lions became great pets with Mr. Barclay's son, who, sad to say, lost his life through one of them greeting him too effusively! As he entered the enclosure, one of the young lions

bounded up to greet him, putting his paws on his chest, and for once, unfortunately, its claws were unsheathed, so that one pierced his chest and lung, with the result that he died. Fritz was with me when I was after buffalo just three weeks before his death. When we got back to Nairobi, Paul Rainey, the American who hunted lions with dogs, was at the hotel, and when I met him the next morning, he greeted me with, "Say, Cherry, I'm going to put one over you this time; Fritz is going to shoot a lion for me with a revolver, and I'm going to film it!" "Well," I replied, "it's good-bye to Fritz!" At which he laughed, and said, "You're jealous, Cherry." Well, I had only journeyed as far as Uganda on my way across Africa, when I was handed a brief telegram from Nairobi, stating, "Fritz dead." It appeared that, hunting near Lake Naivasha, they found a lion on some open ground with bush at one side, in which it took cover. As Fritz was galloping down the open by the side of fairly dense bush to the spot where he had seen it disappear, the lion, hidden by the bushes, was at the same time making its way towards him, and when Fritz had got about three-quarters of the way, it suddenly sprang out, taking him by surprise, hit his little white pony, and knocked both rider and horse to the ground. Fritz fired a couple of shots from his automatic revolver, but the lion took one bite, unfortunately in his side, which punctured the liver, and so poor Fritz's hunting career was over!

McQueen was another old hunter I knew who had begun as a prospector in many countries, and then became an elephant hunter, and in an encounter with a big tusker got the worst of it. Thinking he had killed the great beast, he went up to examine its ivory, when it caught him with its trunk and injured his arm so severely that gangrene set in, and he had to have it amputated.

In spite of this disability, he continued to hunt elephant, and made a great success of it, using a tripod to rest his gun on ! Later, however, he secured a job at the Kilo Gold Mines in the Congo, and finally returned to South Africa to lecture. The last time I saw him was on my way to Tanganyika, when, travelling by night, I passed his camp under Kilimanjaro, and had dinner with him. He was then an officer in the Rhodesian forces, and had won a D.S.O. After dinner we adjourned to his tent, where another officer joined us, and McQueen played a practical joke on me which pleased him immensely (it would take too long to describe it here), and it was only after this that I realised that the other officer was no other than Brett Young, the famous author. I was indeed sorry to hear that McQueen died later, during the campaign, for he was a great favourite, and a most lovable character.

Another charming personality who ranked as one of the most famous elephant hunters Africa has ever known, and had many adventures, not only with animals, but also with the Congo Askaris, who attacked him on the Nile, was W. D. M. Bell, better known as "Karomōja Bell". He was one of the most observant, modest, and courageous of men, to whom fear was a thing unknown. We met again in camp near Kilimanjaro, but this time he was a pilot in the Royal Air Force, whilst I was attached, for the time being, to the Royal Naval Air Service. He was the first and only man to fly at night during the campaign in Africa, which was as risky a thing as any man could do, and how he managed the feat of flying over the German camp I could never understand, nor how, on returning, he missed the little hills around Kilimanjaro, and landed by the aid of a few flares. He wrote "Wanderings of an Elephant Hunter", and I believe he achieved his ambition of accounting for a thousand elephants. Plainly, he was one of the *lucky* hunters.

Buckley was another elephant hunter I knew very well; he was one of the pioneers in the Congo, and made a lot of money out of his shooting. I met him one evening after he had dined well, but not too wisely, in Nairobi, and, knowing he had a lot of money on him, I quietly took care of it, after seeing him to his room in his hotel. The next morning, when I called on him early, I found he was already up and out; but luckily I soon ran across him, and found he had not discovered his loss. When I handed him about eighty pounds in notes, he did not appear at all surprised, but simply remarked, "Thanks, old man, take what you want out of it, and give me the balance!" Buckley also wrote a book on his experiences, and he was undoubtedly one of the finest of hunters, having accounted for at least seven or eight hundred elephants, which not only proves he knew his animal, but shows he was a good shot with plenty of nerve and had luck with him all the time. He retired and bought a coconut plantation near Mombasa, having, I think, come to the conclusion that he had had his share of elephants, and that it was time to stop, before his luck changed! He had a hunter chum, Jack Richardson, a big, powerful man, who was at one time in the Rhodesian Police, and then became an elephant poacher in the Congo. He also had some narrow escapes, and was often implicated in fights with Belgian Askaris, as the Belgian Government was determined to put down this form of theft. On one occasion, he told me, he had to leave his ivory behind and swim across the Semiliki River, whilst bullets were hitting the water all around him. As this river is full of huge crocodiles, I can only think the bullets entering the water must have scared them, otherwise his life would not have been worth a moment's purchase. One of Richardson's closest shaves was with a rogue elephant in the Congo, which had killed quite a number of natives when they

had tried to protect their small plantations by firing at it with an old black-powder gun. It did not take Richardson long to find this particular elephant, and after he had fired both barrels of his 450 as it was charging at him, without effect, the enraged animal was almost on top of him, but he dodged it, and tried to reload as he ran ! It was impossible to turn round and fire, for the elephant's trunk was at times actually over his shoulder, but one of the natives very pluckily fired a black-powder gun as it careered past. Immediately it turned, and charged at the smoke, and as Richardson ran on for a little way, he saw blood streaming down his chest, but could not for the life of him remember being hurt. Having by this time managed to reload, he stopped as the elephant came at him again; he had to fire quickly, but luckily his shot took effect, and after he had put in a second, the elephant staggered and fell. When he examined the body he found about sixty lead bullets in it, which had been fired by the natives, and it had only one tusk; the other had been broken off, possibly in a fight, and had become malformed, shaping itself into huge knots, like the base of an old tree stump. When he showed it to me, I was not surprised the elephant had become bad-tempered, for his sufferings with such a tusk, as well as the bullets all over him, must have been enough to drive any elephant mad.

Pete Pearson was another of the old elephant hunters in the Congo, who gave it up, and turned Game Ranger in Uganda. During our fighting in Tanganyika, we saw a good deal of each other, and enjoyed many a yarn. I nicknamed him Lord Kitchener, the resemblance in every respect being so great. He accompanied the Prince of Wales (the present Duke of Windsor) when he was hunting for elephant in Uganda, and I have heard that the Duke thought so much of him that he sent out a

memorial for Pete's grave at Kampala, where he died after an operation for appendicitis. As I generally had a camera with me during the campaign, I took a stereoscopic photograph of him at Konda Arangi, and when I had dinner with him on the same evening, he told me that on one occasion after he had shot an elephant, he stood on its back to have his photograph taken, and whilst this was being done, he spotted another herd of elephants, and immediately went after them. When he returned, he was amazed to find that the beast on which he had been photographed had, during his absence, got up and disappeared, and worse luck still, he never saw it again !

Several others have had this experience of animals coming back to life, and I know of two cases with lion. The same thing has also happened with rhino, and I remember an evening I spent with the Government Auditor on my first visit to Africa, when I learnt how he had lost his right arm through going up to a rhino that he thought was dead.

George Outram was also one of the early elephant hunters who, later, had success as professionals in taking out shooting parties on safari. On one of these expeditions he met his death in an encounter with a lion. He was an Australian, who fought in the Boer War, after which he wandered up to Central Africa, and became a big-game hunter. He fought with me in the last war in East Africa, and was a lovable companion with a great sense of humour, whose funny stories about the early days in Kenya always delighted me. During his hunting career he took out some very notable people of different nationalities, though he met his death whilst acting as professional to a fellow-countryman. One of his adventurous escapes occurred when he had been poaching elephants and was returning with a good collection of

ivory. He found he was being followed by a game warden, and so that night, when he camped, he sent his ivory out to a given spot where his boys could pick it up next morning. He then collected some stumps of trees and buried them in his tent. Sure enough, next morning, as he was about to strike camp, a game warden strolled in. As he chatted his eye wandered over everything; and when the tent at last came down, it spotted the tell-tale newly-dug earth. Nothing was said, but in the meantime Outram's porters were well on the way with the ivory. Outram lingered on so as to give them a good chance, and eventually he said good-bye, leaving the warden sitting over the dummies in the grave !

On another occasion, he had two Russian noblemen out, and one of them managed to shoot an elephant. Thinking it was dead, Outram walked up to it, when it suddenly rose, and, seizing him with its trunk, tossed him. Luck was with him, for no bones were broken when he fell, and so he quickly rolled out of the way into thick bush, leaving behind his pith helmet, which the elephant immediately attacked. While it was so engaged, Outram managed to crawl behind it, and kept there until at last he tried to make a bolt for it; but at that moment one of his companions luckily returned, and by a well-placed shot brought the enraged animal down. Outram was a brave fellow, and unfortunately met his death through trying to save his native gun-bearer whom a lion had seized. Only a few weeks before this fatal accident he had been camping with me.

One of the most outstanding characters, and the possessor of a charmed life which has stood the test of time in Kenya, is a Yorkshire chum of mine, John Boyes, whose romantic life is told in his two excellent books, "King of the Wa-Kikuyu" and "The Company of Adventurers", both of which are packed with true adven-

tures. He is a sturdy, well-set-up man of small stature, whose life would make an ideal film, though it will never be made because he would never agree to the pictorial exaggerations which are regarded as essential in producing a modern "box-office" film. John fought in the Matabele War, and later made his way up the coast in an Arab dhow, and penetrated East Africa before we took it over. In those days the natives were very hostile, but he tramped up country for hundreds of miles and finally threw in his lot with the Kikuyu tribe, who were, at that time, being crushed and constantly raided by the dreaded Masai. He saw much hard fighting, and in a great battle was responsible for a defeat of the Masai which settled them once and for all. Then he gradually pacified the district around Mount Kenya, bringing the Kikuyu Chiefs, who were hostile to each other, into line and later entering into blood brotherhood with them; and so strong did his power become that he became the uncrowned "King of the Wa-Kikuyu" and is known by that title even to-day. When the British Administration followed in his footsteps and arrived at what is now Nairobi, he was arrested and tried for his life, but to-day he is a successful farmer in that neighbourhood. At one time he was among the most successful and daring elephant poachers in the Lado Enclave; he travelled extensively in Kenya, Uganda, and the Belgian Congo, and was the first white trader to obtain a permit from the late King Menelik to travel from the Abyssinian capital to Nairobi.

At one time, my friend Mr. F. H. Clark was also one of the band of elephant hunters, but I have known him only since he became Game Warden in Kenya—a man possessing a perfect physique and a fine outlook on life. This year he has retired from Government service, and a letter I have just received from him tells how he is now

busily occupied making a success of a farm he has acquired. Last year he told me a remarkable story which illustrates how easy it is to meet disaster after all the dangers one has passed through in an adventurous career. He was near the middle of the Morijo Valley when he spotted a lone bull buffalo, about three hundred yards away, and as its head was quite the largest he had ever seen, he decided to shoot it. Instructing his porters to proceed on their way, with the exception of the Kavirondo policeman, he commenced to stalk the buffalo, which was, of course, watching them. It was a wily old fellow, and Clark wanted to get within two hundred yards of it, but as soon as he was almost within range, the beast tossed its great head about and made off. This happened half a dozen times, and so Clark made up his mind that he would not risk a long-range shot, *for he wanted that buffalo and he wanted it dead!* At last, success seemed to be within his grasp, but just as he began taking sight, the old bull tossed its head again, and galloped off, entering the belt of scrub about seven hundred yards from him. Shooting buffalo in park-like country and hunting them in very thick scrub are two vastly different things, and knowing this well, Clark decided to leave the animal alone, knowing he had fifteen miles to cover before he reached his camp. And so, with lighted pipe and shouldered rifle, he and the Kavirondo set out to overtake the porters, and he soon dismissed the buffalo from his mind. However, when about half-way through the scrub, he suddenly heard a snort, and almost simultaneously felt as if he had been struck in the seat of his pants by a thunderbolt, for he shot into the air and returned to earth completely knocked out!

When he regained consciousness, his vocabulary was highly coloured, and he shouted to the native to fire three shots rapidly as an alarm to attract his porters. At the

sound of the shots the buffalo crashed away through the scrub, and at the same time the native bolted, too ! In due course the porters arrived, and produced a chair and a mirror, with the aid of which Clark saw that quite a large piece had been removed from his left buttock and that he was also suffering from two other very big and deep lacerations. A hammock was then constructed with poles and a ground-sheet, and by this, an ox-waggon, a car and finally a train, he eventually reached Nairobi hospital, over two hundred miles away. When well on the road to recovery, he moved to Mombasa, and entrusted his old native boy Antonio with the task of dressing his wounds three times a day. In due course, he felt that further dressings could be dispensed with, and when one day Antonio appeared as usual, he was standing nude, with his back to the mirror, examining the deepest wounds. The inspection confirmed his decision and so, airily waving Antonio back, he said, " Antonio, *that* business is now finished." " Yes, Bwana," replied Antonio, " the business is finished all right, but Bwana's beautiful back-side is spoilt for ever !"

It will have been observed how humour and fun have mingled with deeds of epic bravery in the lives of these men, as they penetrated into unknown regions and faced death on countless occasions. That is life—tragedy and comedy going hand in hand through the two worlds of Nature and Man.

CHAPTER XI

LEAVING NAIROBI FOR THE GREAT RIFT VALLEY

“ Yet I doubt not through the ages
One increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened
With the process of the suns.”

TENNYSON.

WHILST in Nairobi I was constantly reminded of the presence of human progress in the midst of primitive conditions — civilisation and savagery being next-door neighbours and on friendly terms.

One day I was chatting to a young man in Nairobi who was qualifying for his flying certificate. I happened to mention my ambition to obtain moving pictures of the secretary bird with her young in the nest, and he told me that while flying a few days previously, he had come down very low on account of engine trouble, and, despite his anxiety about his plane, remembered seeing a secretary bird leave its nest as he passed close to it. It was about fifteen miles from Nairobi. Two days later he came to see me again to say he had flown over the nest that morning, and the bird was sitting close. Here was an up-to-the-minute young man, I thought, who could possibly help me to carry out my ambition to film the secretary bird. He then offered to fly me over the spot so that I could see the position of the nest and judge my photographic chances. Having had sufficient aerial experiences to last me a lifetime, I suggested he might have another look at the nest in a few days, and try to see if the young were in it. This he did, and said that the nest was in an ideal position, in a little ravine, and that I

could overlook it with my camera from the bank. Without waiting for him to add anything further, I said I would start next morning in my friend Rees' photographic lorry, but he immediately put a damper on the idea by saying that the grass was pretty high, that there were many hidden rocks and stones around, and also that there were a couple of rhinos close to the spot. I realised at once that this made the thing too risky to attempt, because, if the rhino charged, it would be impossible to get away. However, I did not relinquish the idea, but consulted my friend F. H. Clark, a most helpful game warden, who strongly advised me to give it up, for, he found, the nest was just inside the Game Reserve, where the animals were just as dangerous as anywhere else, and so once more I lost the chance of photographing this interesting bird in its home. I have been charged so many times by rhino that I have learnt to have a great respect for them. I think I felt more helpless than ever before, when I came suddenly upon one, last year. We had diverged from the road, picking our way over rough country in a small box-body car, when suddenly we came to a deep and narrow little valley, and we had just started down the steep slope when my wife saw, barely twenty yards away, a huge bull rhino in front of us, resting under the shade of a tree. Hastily putting her hand on the wheel and pointing towards it, she made the driver pull up the car so sharply that he stalled the engine. Meantime, the rhino was moving its nose from side to side. Then he charged at full speed, puffing like a steam engine! It all happened so quickly that he was scarcely five yards from us when the driver gave the shrillest yell I ever heard. Instantly the great beast turned and went galloping back across the valley, and then turned round and looked towards us for some time as if debating whether to charge again. However, we

stayed perfectly still, and it was with infinite relief we saw the rhino go lumbering off. After several attempts the driver got the car to start, and away we went bumping over some of the roughest ground I have ever seen until, at last, I shouted, "I don't think I shall have a screw left in any of my cameras!"

When we finally reached the road, I warmly congratulated the driver on his presence of mind, for we were all unarmed, and it had been a very close shave indeed.

And then came the day when we left Nairobi, and really set out on our way up country. Almost at once we began to rise, through the Kikuyu country, passing the Wireless Station from which, a few nights before, I had broadcast. I was again reminded of the queer blending of modern and ancient as we climbed up through richly cultivated country and passed many native (Kikuyu) women with heavy loads on their backs, making their way into Nairobi. It is astonishing the weight these women can carry, even those of small stature, and often they carry their babies as well. They take the strain of their loads by means of leather straps across their foreheads. They are very picturesque in their brown leather skirts, and, being fond of decoration, they load themselves with brass, copper wire, and iron, and this sometimes covers their arms, legs, and neck, being wound tightly from wrist to elbow, and often from elbow to shoulder. One wonders how they can bear it all. The native women of Central Africa are undoubtedly beasts of burden, whilst the men, though not exactly lazy, avoid anything in the nature of work. I never see these women weighted down without a shudder, and it puzzles me why the Government has not passed a law limiting their loads to forty pounds, for I am sure they most often carry about eighty. Over thirty years ago, my safari outfitters warned me that the

Government regulation for a load carried by a porter was that it was not to be more than sixty pounds ! Even in the Congo I found the regulation was only fifty pounds. Soon we were winding and climbing through cultivated country of great natural beauty with wattle and coffee plantations, shambas and native villages, dotted on the hillside and in the valleys, and near the road were modern hotels to which those working in Nairobi could come to spend a week-end in healthy, cool air, and look down across the vast lowland plains right into the far horizon. Beautiful wild flowers lined the sides of the road, and *when we arrived at the top of the mountain, it was bare and park-like and in no sense tropical.* The mountain is 7,400 feet above sea-level, and after travelling a few miles farther we reached the Escarpment, which overlooks the Great Rift Valley, one of the greatest sights in the world, a scene which baffles description. I have seen this vast space many times and under many varying conditions, for during the years of progress in transport I have walked, ridden, and finally motored through it. To-day, it seems lifeless under the blazing sun, the only movement being that of the gigantic clouds riding majestically across the vault of blue sky and casting shadows which chase each other over the earth.

Messrs Ilfords had arranged to send me out by air-mail some of their Infra-Red plates, and here was a good opportunity to try them out on Suswa. Upon studying the results, one print revealed an interesting discovery—that away to the left of the volcano there was a hot spring; it could not have been seen through my glasses, nor did it appear in a panorama which I took with a telephoto lens.

The appearance everywhere of great volcanoes, now happily dead, made one try to imagine the colossal convulsions which must have occurred, and shaken half the world. What an awe-inspiring scene for early man,

when these great craters of Central Africa were spouting fire, boulders and smoke, and molten lava streamed down their sides and far on to the plains! Away in the distance is the Mau Escarpment, while on the left is the extinct volcano of Suswa. On the right is Mount Longonot, another extinct volcano, while below are countless little hills dotted around which at some time must have erupted. A study of the Great Rift Valley reveals the fact that Africa at one time was almost split in two by a great crack that runs from the Red Sea right through the heart of the country by way of the great lakes as far as Mozambique on the Indian Ocean. The Great Rift Valley is a chain of valleys and lakes and one of the most interesting geological formations in the world, and it is said that in the great upheaval it stretched across the Red Sea as far as the River Jordan. There are astonishing signs of this past volcanic activity, and even to-day steam jets are found in these huge extinct volcanoes.

The climb up the Suswa crater is easy and demands much less effort than climbing some of the other volcanoes. There is an accessible entrance into the crater through an opening at the side, about two hundred yards wide, by which zebra, wildebeeste, kongoni and gazelle reach the level surface of the crater floor, where there is plenty of food for them. Even rhino and giraffe frequent the place, and at one time elephant were supposed to go there to die, presumably because it was so secluded, and, like most other creatures, they prefer to hide when dissolution is at hand. Steam jets and gases can be seen puffing up not far from this entrance, some of the latter being very dangerous.

When I was first there in 1910, I had a visitor with me just out from England, and he would insist on stretching out his hand to feel the heat from these gases. I warned him to keep away even from the smell of them,

telling him how dangerous it could be; but he quickly forgot my warning and walked round and through the fumes, and when, after taking a few pictures of the crater, I looked for him, I saw him almost on his knees holding his head, and in great pain, which lasted for a couple of hours.

In this valley there is one blow-hole where many animals were killed while feeding up close to the poisonous gases, but it has now been railed off. At certain times, generally from four to seven in the morning and in the evening, these fumes, which have been proved to be hydrochloric acid gas, are of sufficient strength to kill an animal in twenty seconds.

On another occasion I travelled past Suswa and over the Mau southwards towards the German border, and by accident got on to the now famous Serengeti Plains without knowing it. I was accompanied by two cowboys. We had lost our course during the heat of the day when visibility was almost nil, the heat creating waves which radiated up and down from earth to sky and enlarged animals to three times their size. It was the worst heat wave I ever experienced in Africa. I knew we were lost, and so we sat down to give the horses a rest. Whilst we did so, scores of animals passed in front of us as if making for a water-hole, so we foolishly followed for a time; then I realised they were trekking, for it was all flat and dried-up country, and we stopped again until the heat waned; and after seeing the position of the sun, started again. In the distance were thousands of animals. Darkness quickly descended, and it was not long before lions began to roar all around us. Luckily the American-trained lassoing horses from the Wild West did not seem at all afraid, and so were quite unlike one I had on a previous safari, which shivered so much when it heard lions that I could hardly keep on its back.

It was not until nearly midnight that we found our camp, where they had built a big bonfire and were firing shots at intervals to attract our attention. We were greatly relieved to be safe again, having passed through a most unpleasant experience. We had only snatched a light breakfast before we started at day-break, and yet, strange to say, none of us felt hungry until we had been in camp for about ten minutes; this was due, of course, to the fact that throughout the latter part of the day our nerves had been at a high pitch. Nowadays, all these journeys are done by car, and the lions in the Serengeti Plains have proved themselves anything but savage. In fact, they might be described as perfect gentlemen, and are quite as well-behaved as those I saw last year wandering about among some thirty cars in the Kruger National Park, the only difference being that the lions on the Serengeti Plains come to be fed, whilst those in South Africa seek only admiration.

The authorities at Kruger Park solemnly assured me that at no time have the lions ever been fed there, which I have no doubt is true, and only goes to show what I have so often said, that, despite experience, a man can never tell what lions will do. The condition on entering the Kruger Park is never at any time to alight from a car, and when wandering around just after daybreak looking for such animals as the graceful kudu, with its magnificent horns, a driver will be stopped many times by other car occupants with the question, "Have you seen any lions?" The visitors there seem to be interested in nothing else; and so, if you wish to see lions in the daytime, don't fail to make a journey to the Serengeti Plains, where there are more lions visible in a day than one can ever hope to see in six months anywhere else.

Apart from the lions, there are thousands of other animals of every kind to be seen, and if one is lucky enough

to be there when they are migrating between the lake and Ngorongoro, a pageant of creatures will be seen that no other part of the earth can equal. In other parts of Central Africa, a look-out needs to be kept for lions, but on the Serengeti Plains they are on the look-out for you ! One interesting characteristic is that when a number of them are feeding, they are not at all unfriendly to each other, and even when there are several families at a kill it will be seen from the illustration how sociable they are. I was much amused a few years ago, when I met the Milwaukee Museum expedition under the leadership of the Director, Mr. S. A. Barrett, in the Rift Valley. He was returning from the Serengeti Plains and told me 'some of his experiences, one being that whilst filming several lions feeding some twenty yards away from his lorry, a lioness left her companions and walked to the lorry, where she raised herself on her hind feet, looking solemnly into his lens, and at the same time began sharpening her claws down the side of the lorry—rather as a cat would do. The lorry was not covered 'with steel wire-netting to protect him, so he stopped turning the handle of the camera, and I don't blame him !

Here, the valley is about a thousand feet below, and in it I have seen animals of every description. On my last trip as I was descending the Escarpment, I met a couple of lorries with a strange load. They had stopped on the hill, and when I drew closer I saw, looking out of a box-like contraption fastened on to the lorry, the heads and half the necks of two giraffe. It was a queer and not altogether pleasant sight, for the poor giraffe were taking a last look at their African home, while several native boys stood interested on a big rock watching the strange cargo on its way to Nairobi. I took some pictures of these innocent, but proud-looking creatures, and as they turned their delicate heads towards me, pity for them

overwhelmed me, as I shared in their grief at leaving the plains they loved. Where were they going, and would I one day, God forbid, see them cooped up in some menagerie or Zoo? I thought I saw a look of reproach in their great soft eyes as they gazed wistfully into space, and I wished I could have freed them, so that they could join their fellows and roam the valleys and plains again, among the thorn trees and grass, in the warm sunny land which is their birthright !

Having descended into the valley, I told my native driver to turn off to the right after having crossed a small stream, but he at once pointed out that the house which used to be there was now "finished", this being the native way of explaining it no longer existed, and then I remembered hearing that Captain and Mrs. Leake, whom I intended visiting, had taken down the old home of their parents, and had built another a little nearer the Escarpment, almost under the cliffs of the mountain, so we continued our journey along roads lined with dried, burnt-up grass, which, in the rays of the sun, assumed the colour of the road itself. Suddenly, we turned off the main road, to our right, passing over a small bridge, and under some giant mimosa trees I beheld a sight I shall never forget.

Before us stretched a long winding road, bordered by the most wonderful colour-scheme of flowers on either side—cannas, daisies, roses—in fact, an endless collection of the most varied shrubs and ornamental trees I ever saw, the predominant colour being the flaming red of giant geraniums scintillating in the dazzling sunlight, and mingling with the soft pale blue sky, flecked with banks of white clouds rising above the rocky background.

Half-way up the drive I stopped the car for a few seconds to gaze on all this beauty, and listen to the soothing murmur of multitudes of insects. Rich floral

scents floated up intoxicatingly, and although the kaleidoscopic riot of colour had been designed by man, it filled me with joy to be able to participate in so fine an example of the artistic co-operation possible between humans and Nature.

Ahead, I saw the large bungalow built high up on a bank, with a stately mimosa tree rising at the side of steep terraces of steps gracefully guarding it. And half-way down the steps stood Sally, as I have always known her, with a smile of welcome, and a hearty handshake for my wife and myself. Charles Leake and two delightful small daughters, and Mr and Mrs Francis, all gave us a memorable welcome. We then heard that the delightful bungalow had been designed by our hosts, and actually built by Indians under their direction. They had certainly attained what they sought—a beautiful home amidst the most fascinating scenery. A spring rises just above the house, flows down into several pools, and then winds its way down through trees and rocks, bordered on every side by groups of vividly coloured flowers.

Several moorhens were quietly feeding in the lower pool, whilst a beautiful dragon-fly flitted to and fro across the water. As I stood at this pool looking right down the valley, Sally explained how they had stocked the water with fish, and as she spoke I watched the shadows across the water, and I visualised this very spot enveloped in the darkness of the African night ! I could see the leopard approach from his home in the high rocks above us, hearing his soft footfall, and then the slight sound he made as he slaked his thirst at the pool. I mentioned the fact, cautiously. " Oh yes !" said Sally, " we have to fasten up securely all our dogs and other animals at nightfall. Only a few nights ago a leopard carried off one of our cherished cats !"

How sinister life can be ! Beauty everywhere, crowned

by daylight, and yet, in a few hours, marauders would be on the prowl, and darkness would have transformed the world of gay colours into a silent place of danger and shadows.

We retraced our steps to the verandah, and whilst having tea gazed down the valley. Far beyond rose Mount Longonot, clouds curling round its summit and rising into space, giving the impression it had come to volcanic life again. The conversation turned to horses, and I was invited to view their stud, about seventy-five yards from the house. There I saw the most modern and up-to-date stables, the stalls of which were occupied by some of the finest horses I have seen in East Africa. All the attendants were native boys who took a keen interest in their work, each horse having its own groom, or "syce", as he is called. These syces ride the horses when out exercising them each morning, on a prepared mile stretch on the plains.

We sat round a huge log fire that evening, the fireplace being built in the old English style, and I realised how necessary such warmth was, for as dusk approached I had noticed a sudden cold wave of air enveloping us, which, in this valley, is caused by suction, and often creates a wind of hurricane speed. Discussing the many interesting animals on this estate of 30,000 acres, I was thrilled to hear of a new animal found some years ago on the adjoining property, about eight miles away—a new species of rabbit. It appeared that Mrs Leake's father, an old friend of mine, shot it, and finding it to be of a reddish colour and knowing it was something unique, he immediately sent it to Nairobi. However, owing to climatic conditions, the skin was ruined before it got there, and so was of no value as a record. That night I dreamt of the strange new "rabbit". How could I find one to photograph? I seemed to see dozens of them in the rocks,

all laughing at me, and then I was awakened by the shriek of a hyrax and the noise of the screech owls.

I rose at daybreak, and, after an early breakfast, went down to the plains to see the horses training. On the way, I passed a small species of hawk sitting on a survey post, and then a stork strutted by searching for food—just a few yards from the roadway.

Near the training ground I spotted a Secretary Bird, also hunting for food; and then a pair of crested cranes, uttering their mournful call, winged their way across and settled about half a mile away. Later, I went over in their direction, and, after watching for some time, discovered they were nesting in a very small swamp, but as it was knee deep, I did not attempt to make a hide, although I should have liked very much to photograph so beautiful a mother bird on her nest. It was most tantalising, for all except the little swamp was absolutely dry ground. Perhaps the birds knew a thing or two about naturalists!

Returning to the exercising ground, one might have imagined oneself at Newmarket, except that the riders were black, and a few hundred yards away zebra, wildebeeste and giraffe were quietly feeding. The training work was carried out in a most business-like way. Whilst there, my eye wandered towards Mount Longonot, and I saw the black rock, a stream of lava about a hundred and thirty feet high and a hundred and fifty yards wide, which had run down into the plains when the mountain was in eruption, and I recalled the exciting day, packed full of thrills, I had spent there only a few years back, whilst lassoing a lion. Now, although I was gazing on a peaceful scene, I knew that in the background lions were almost sure to be watching us, and it turned out that one, in particular, was much closer than I imagined, for several natives rushed up in great excitement and said

that a lion had killed a beast in their kraal, and, worse still, when they left, was trying to enter a hut in which several of the terrified natives had barred themselves for safety. The grooms on horseback listened to the natives' story, and then carried on with their exercising, as if it was an everyday occurrence! In Captain Leake's car were a couple of rifles, it being a habit to carry firearms with those who live on the edge of civilisation, which is the entrance to the jungle, and so we were soon on our way to the native kraal, only to discover the lion had departed. We knew it was useless to try to find it, as *there was a fairly large donga about half a mile away, with long grass, bushes and a small stream running through, where the lions would go to drink, hide, and sleep, in the heat of the day.*

During the morning the conversation turned to films, and I was interested to hear that the Leakes had given permission to a producer to make part of a picture on their property. He had finished his work, and had then left the country, but two lions that he had used still remained in cages, which someone in Nairobi had arranged to look after until he was able to dispose of them.

Shortly after, we came upon a long enclosure which had been used for trapping animals. It was about half a mile in length, and a hundred yards wide at the entrance, narrowing down to a point, the sides being composed of thorn bushes to a height of about eight feet, and about six feet in width. This, I learnt, had been made by the film producer.

It then occurred to my friends to go and look at his vacated camp, which was hidden away in a wide deep donga, amongst giant flat-topped mimosa trees, with the tiny stream I mentioned running through it, creating many beautiful scenic effects valuable for a film. In a corner of a fenced-in little paddock, near a grass banda,

were two or three small cages in which the lions had been kept, but now they were broken and empty, so we came to the conclusion that the lion which had just visited the native kraal had escaped from his prison. A disturbing feature was that, having been in contact with humans for so many weeks, he would no longer be afraid of man. However, the sequel came later, for the poor beast was shot.

On the next morning, we went to the home of the newly-discovered rabbits I had heard so much about, and we stopped for a few moments at the orchard at the foot of the hill, to gather some delicious figs. Having filled a basket with them, we started away down the valley, and after travelling half an hour realised we had lost the track. However, we soon found it again, and saw in front of us a cloud of "dust", which turned out to be made by hundreds of cattle being driven along by their Masai herdsmen, most of whom leant on their spears as we passed and watched us silently. I was rather surprised to see these people there, as I thought they had been moved much farther South. A little later, we passed a large manyatta, where several Masai women and children came out to have a look at us, as we went bumping along over the rough country, partly grass with an outcrop of stones. However, conditions did not disturb me, for my mind was centred on those rabbits.

This country used to be teeming with big game, but I saw very few animals about, except a small herd of zebra which stood looking at us for a moment and then galloped away. We were then on the plains, which are very deceptive, as I shall explain. In front of us I noticed a solitary tree, the lower half of which seemed to have been swallowed by the ground, and when we got to within thirty yards of it, we stopped, and I was informed this was the place where the rabbits lived. As, however,

there was nothing to be seen but a lot of round stones and very short grass, my wife looked disappointedly at me. But I knew the valley and suspected there was a ravine near by, and, sure enough, on taking a dozen steps forward, I discovered that the tree was growing at the head of a rocky ravine about forty feet deep, seventy yards across, and nearly half a mile long.

In other words, this was one of those volcanic "cracks" often found on the floor of the Rift Valley, which could be entered at the mouth almost on ground-level. In shape it resembled a sausage, or an elongated horseshoe, and when I looked over the edge of the ravine, I noticed one or two big rocks weighing many tons, with bushes and grass around them, but near the head, some twenty yards from the tree, were a jumble of broken-up rocks that had rolled down from the cliff-side and had left one overhanging piece with a space of two feet under which animals could shelter in safety. I naturally assumed this was the home of the rabbits, but I was wrong, for they used to live in some loose rocks fifty yards farther down the ravine. I sat down for a while, and all was quiet. Nothing was to be seen save a few giant lizards with beautifully coloured blue heads chasing each other over the rocks, and a few butterflies flitting backwards and forwards. I suggested we should climb down into the ravine near the tree, where I had noticed a winding pathway, which was actually an animal track. Our companions had left us, and had gone down to where the ravine opened on to the plains. Accordingly, we descended without very much trouble, but had not gone very far before suddenly I smelt lions, and knew at once they were not many yards away from us, in a thick bush. I stopped and held up my hand, keeping my eye on the bush, and said quietly to my wife, "Walk slowly back—lions!" But at the same moment I had stopped, she too

knew there were lions about, and so, backing slowly, we at last reached ground-level again. We then walked a short distance, and sat on the edge of the ravine, looking towards the spot where the lions were, and as we sat there, several zebra that had not noticed us wandered towards the tree, and then suddenly snorted and bolted, having, of course, scented the lions as well. Some twenty yards from the place where the lions were, I noticed a large piece of overhanging rock with a slab lying in front, with broken rocks and foliage around, and whilst I was examining this with my field glasses, a couple of rock rabbits, giants they seemed, appeared. Then I remembered I was looking through field glasses, which probably gave that effect, but, no, for when I lowered them, the creatures were certainly giants and bigger than any I had ever seen in all my experience. After a minute or so they disappeared, and then a little later, barely a yard from where they had been, I saw to my utter amazement the strangest and most repulsive animal I have ever looked upon. It was lying with its head towards me—a head that was broad at the top, with very large ears, big round eyes, and a pointed nose. Its body was sausage-shaped, and covered with very short hair of a reddish hue, and its legs were stumpy. In fact, except for its colour, it looked like a cross between a young pig and a hyena. I sat there amazed, and my wife, seeing my interest, trained her glasses on it, and cried, "My goodness, did you ever see such a queer-looking creature in all your life?" I quickly set up my camera with a telephoto lens and trained it on the oddity, being hardly able to focus it in my excitement, and then, just as I was satisfied with the set-up, our native driver came into view on the sky-line, asking if he should get our lunch ready, and although my attention had been called away for perhaps only two seconds, when I looked again, the animal had

disappeared, evidently having seen the native boy. I waited hours, but it never appeared again, and, to make things quite impossible, the sky darkened and a violent tropical thunderstorm burst upon us. So, regretfully, I had to leave not only the rabbits, but the queerest-looking animal I had ever seen.

I looked up at the scarred slopes of Mount Longonot before us, and recalled the other strange animal I had seen up there in 1911, resembling the much-discussed Nandi Bear, a creature which, it is claimed, exists, but has never been caught.

Anyway, to-day I had seen a *new* animal, not recorded in any nature book, and I felt very depressed that I had missed the chance of a lifetime by a second or two. Although I had hopes of paying a return visit to this spot on my way back from the Congo, for which I was leaving early in the morning, my time in Africa unfortunately ran short, and the opportunity never came. And so I found it hard to agree with Bacon, who wrote: "A wise man will make more opportunities than he finds." Indeed, I am sure Bacon was not thinking of the pranks Nature's creatures can play on man !

Anyhow, the storm passed over, leaving the air crystal clear, and we were able to motor home without being enveloped, like the Masai cattle, in a cloud of dust.

CHAPTER XII

THE GREAT RIFT VALLEY TO LAKE NAIVASHA

"Nature is an Æolian harp, a musical instrument whose tones are the re-echo of higher strings within us."—NOVALIS.

WITH great reluctance we left our friends, and this interesting part of Africa, to journey towards the Congo. In front of us a "dust-devil" crossed the road, whirling round and round, picking up dust, leaves and small sticks, and weaving them into its dancing coils. At certain seasons of the year in this valley, I have seen scores of these wind devils during the day chasing across the plains like phantoms, some being almost two hundred feet in height. From experience, I know how unpleasant it is to be caught in even a small one, and I dare not imagine what would happen if trapped in the whirling depths of a giant devil. I have always noticed that the animals take good care to keep well away from them.

As we drove onwards I looked up towards the Escarpment, with its great forests inhabited by so many interesting creatures, and I recalled the many fatiguing hours I had spent there trying to secure photographs of the Black Colobus monkey, and, in particular, of the rare and elusive Bongo, an animal seldom seen in captivity, and to be found only in the most dense parts of the forests.

I wondered what the authorities would have said in those days if I had chased this beautiful animal with dogs, for ideas of "sportsmanship" seem to have changed in this strange world of false values. I admit I was a bit green on my first visit to the country, for I never thought

of salt licks or of providing myself with salt bait. However, I came away without a photograph of the Bongo. As a matter of fact, I never even got a glimpse of one! As the car sped on, we passed through acres and acres of cultivated land, some of which was growing wheat; and yet only a short time ago it was raw jungle, inhabited by lion, giraffe, zebra, wildebeeste and gazelle. In time we came opposite Kijabe railway station, a mile up on the side of the Escarpment. Kijabe, a native word, means "wind", and I shall never forget spending a night there, during which it certainly lived up to its name. Just after sunset it began to blow a gale which lasted for several hours, and, to add to the discomfort, it became extremely cold, which was especially noticeable after the intense heat of the day.

Speaking of tropical heat, I am reminded of two Kikuyu women I saw coming out from the back of one of the railway sheds where they had evidently been helping themselves to "coal tar", and the sight that met my eyes was ludicrous, for their shaved heads were covered with "coal tar", and, as the sun was beating down on them at the time, you can imagine what they looked like.

Birds of several different species flitted to and fro before us, some beautifully coloured, and then a small buck suddenly bounded across the road. I spotted a hawk trying to catch a small bird, but at the last moment the little thing dived into a thick thorn bush, and, swiftly descending, the hawk had to make a quick turn otherwise it might have been impaled on the long thorns. We often heard a thud against the wind-screen of the car, caused by birds banging against it as they flew across the road. This was not due to the speed at which we were travelling, for the road was bad, but because either they misjudged the speed of the car, or it was so unfamiliar an object that they did not realise it was moving. It

would indeed be interesting if we could but look upon the world of man with the eyes of a bird, for birds seem unable to appreciate the speed of anything without legs.

After climbing this road a little farther, which, by the way, used to be the old track to Uganda, we reached the summit close to the edge of the slope of Mount Longonot, 9,000 feet in height, its ragged crater top—blown off during the great eruption—revealing, in dramatic silhouette, its jagged edge against the sky-line. It is now possible to climb to the top of this crater and look into its depths, where, 1,280 feet below, dense bush and trees are growing. It is one and a half miles across, but I have never heard of anyone descending to the bottom, and I should imagine only the foolhardy would attempt it. Although it is a stiff climb up, one is well repaid for the effort, on account of the truly marvellous views obtainable of this amazing part of Africa.

Soon after we had passed Longonot and had begun to descend again, we were faced with scenery of an entirely different character, which, nevertheless, belonged to the same valley. Far below in the distance, glistening in the sunlight, lay Lake Naivasha, whilst a short distance from the road, in the foreground, were a variety of animals, including zebra, kongoni, gazelle and ostrich, just as they were to be seen years ago. It did me good to see this evidence that some sensible settler had preserved the wild creatures, thereby retaining for the traveller one of the most beautiful scenes in Kenya.

The railway and the road run almost parallel down to Naivasha. By the way, it is said that the Great Rift Valley was once one huge lake, but little now remains save a few small ones. Lake Naivasha is fifteen miles long, and has been endowed with the most beautiful setting imaginable, crowned by the wonderful mountains which form its background. Here are presented some of

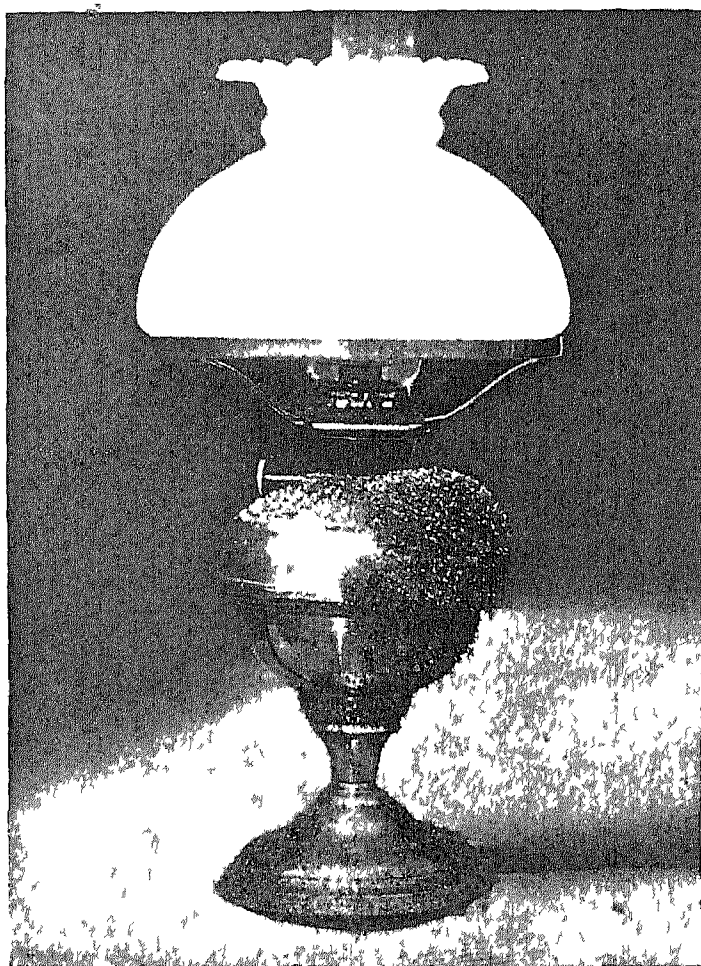
the loveliest colour effects Nature can produce, especially in the morning and evening, equalled only by the magical reflections of the clouds in the water, which may be likened to a vast mirror in which the heavens can gaze upon their beauty.

It was here, on the mountain, that a kindly railway overseer once gave me a ride on his trolley, down the ten miles to the station, at Naivasha. The trolley was pushed up to the top of the mountain by two powerful natives, and when we started downhill, they gave it a running push for about fifteen yards to give us a good start, and then jumped on to it, but that start was *far too good*, for it developed into a mad careering, as if through space, and I came to the conclusion that we must have been doing at least sixty miles an hour ! We even scared the game that were feeding by the score close up to the railway track, and I was wondering how it was all going to end, when by some miracle we kept to the rails, reached the level, ran into Naivasha through the station, and actually stopped ! It was the most alarming trip I ever undertook, and I doubt if I would repeat it, even for a thousand pounds !

As we travelled down the incline to the lake and Township of Naivasha, in normal fashion this time, a few small rocks appeared on our right, which, by the time we reached the lake, formed a cliff, about eighty feet high. As we approached the beginning of the rocks, I saw a number of gazelle quietly feeding, and also a troop of baboons wandering along, descendants apparently of those I used to try to photograph here many years ago, for they scampered off to the rocks just as their forefathers used to do, when I got out of the car to photograph them. On reaching the level of the lake, I saw the same belt of mimosa trees on one side of the road, and the cliff on the other. This was where I had first camped



THE AFRICAN KINGFISHER IS A "FROG" EATER



AT MY CAMP ON THE SHORES OF LAKE NAIVASHA THE ELEPHANT
MOSQUITOS USED TO SWARM AROUND MY LAMP

when I explored this fascinating lake in 1909, and I quickly noticed there was something missing, for where was the water that once had come up to within twenty yards of my camp? After a further study of the scene, I was astonished to discover that the lake had receded at least three quarters of a mile, and that now, in place of water, vegetable gardens were flourishing where once I used to paddle my canoe. At that time there were no fish in the lake, although cormorants, king-fishers and other fish-eating birds were living there, all of which I had photographed at their nests. I recalled those exciting days with the camera, when, for instance, at the foot of the rocks opposite my camp there was a bank of earth in which a king-fisher was nesting, and I photographed it with unbounded enthusiasm and complete success. It was similar in colour to our species, but very much smaller. I managed to obtain a series of pictures each time it stopped on a twig outside the burrow, and I discovered that it always carried a small frog in its beak to feed its young. I spent several hours in a hide-up securing the film, a couple of rock-rabbits watching me curiously from a ledge of the rock some twelve feet above; they sat without moving for a half an hour at a time, but directly I tried to train my camera on them they disappeared. A little way back on the road I had seen a board advertising the presence of a hotel by the lake side, and so I retraced my steps, deciding to explore the beautiful country surrounding Lake Naivasha instead of going on at once to the Township. I was very glad I made this decision, for the hotel proved to be situated nearly opposite Crescent Island, in beautifully laid out grounds, with the lake in front and the distant mountains rising beyond. As I have always loved this lake, I eventually decided to stay a few days and renew my acquaintance with the surrounding country

and the numerous birds and animals which dwell there.

One of the most interesting days I spent here was with Mr McCrae and his brother, who lived but a few miles from the hotel. He had built himself a beautiful home surrounded by natural scenery, the gardens stretching down to the water's edge. It was there I saw the spoor of the hippo, for these animals were nightly visitors, sometimes forgetting their manners so much as to stray into the kitchen garden !

To my knowledge the hippo have been there for many years, which says a great deal for my hosts, who are *real* animal lovers—very different from the “sportsmen” who have always to go out and kill something. We wandered through the massive groups of flowers of all hues on to the lawn, and to complete the charming picture, two fully grown cheetahs came bounding gracefully across to greet their master. They were in perfect condition, and very tame and playful. Mr McCrae caressed their heads and remarked that one of them was more docile than the other, although they both seemed very friendly. Calling to the native boy who looked after them to bring some food, he said he would show me how agile they were, being able to jump with ease into the fork of a very big tree standing close by on the lawn, which branched out into half a dozen boughs about eight feet from the ground. It obviously presented no difficulty to them, and I was entranced by the lovely picture made by one of them as it stretched upwards, revealing its natural grace and beautiful lines. Away back in my mind I felt I had seen a picture of a cheetah in a tree very similar to this in one of the illustrated London papers; and Mr McCrae then told me he had given permission to an American Film Company to photograph the animals some months ago.

I was offered a present of two young cheetahs when I

first visited Africa, but thinking they would be quite easy to obtain before I eventually left the country, I declined the gift—to my subsequent regret, for it was years before I again saw any in captivity in Kenya. But when Europeans began to settle in the country, it was not long before they were keeping all kinds of pets, including cheetahs, and one man I knew had four of these attractive creatures.

These two were really delightful, playing and romping with the dogs, and one of them, feeling tired, jumped into our car and lay down for a rest in the driver's seat ! Not seeing my native driver anywhere, I walked towards *the outbuildings at the back of the house*, and asked one of the boys standing there to call him, whereupon a broad grin spread over his face and he silently pointed to a door nearby. Looking quickly towards it, I saw the door was being held open about four inches, with my driver's scared face looking through the aperture. I sternly told him to come along as I wanted to depart, but he hurriedly said, "No, Bwana, the cheetah is in my place, but he has no licence !" at which we all laughed heartily. However, the cheetahs went to their own bed very obediently, and we were able to proceed.

The extent of the extraordinary transformation of Central Africa to-day will be realised when I explain that a few years ago land could have been purchased on the shores of the lake for a few pounds, whereas now its value has increased so much that a piece of ground would cost as much as if it were in a residential area near London ! Beautifully designed houses, costing thousands of pounds to build, line the shores of the lake. Furthermore, trout have been introduced, and appear to flourish in the lake. This does not surprise me in so far as feeding is concerned, for if you look at the photograph of my lamp, taken when I was camped on the lake-side, you

will see that it is covered with elephant mosquitoes, a favourite food of trout, and a variety which, I am glad to say, do not carry malaria.

The lake is not very deep except at certain places, one of them being Crescent Island, which is, apparently, the rim of a crater. It has been asserted that this lake and its surroundings are the scene of Rider Haggard's great story "*Allan Quatermain*", in which Curtis, Good and company were drawn into a subterranean passage. No such passage, it is true, has ever been discovered, but I have a suspicion that the water escapes into the crater at Crescent Island, for I have thoroughly explored the *shore all round the lake, and there is no other outlet, even though it has a big river flowing into it.* Further colour is lent to the idea that this was the scene of the book by the fact that there are hot springs near the lake and also a deep cleft through the mountains, known as Hell's Gate, the sides of which are, in some places, seven hundred feet deep. It has been said that the two main characters in the book, Curtis and Good, were drawn from Sir Frederick Jackson and F. C. Selous, both of whom were lovers of the great continent.

To-day it is possible to motor right round the lake, a distance of thirty miles, passing magnificent scenery, the colour effects being particularly wonderful. What delightful material for the artist, if only he could capture the lake-side in a colourful mood! One finds all this natural beauty in addition to myriads of birds, and all kinds of animals. I have looked down on a scene where hundreds of birds of different species lived, seemingly in a world of their own, each having its appointed task—some building nests, others courting or fighting, groups quietly feeding; and I could see others looking after their small families, and once again I wished I could wield a brush to capture the busy scene on canvas.

I have done a great deal of sailing on this lake, and also, I am afraid, a great deal of swearing too, for a fine breeze would suddenly die away, forcing me to take to the oars, and rowing in terrific heat is no joke.

Every kind of water-fowl abounds on the surface of the lake, and all varieties of game flock to the water's edge to drink. The lagoons around are fringed with broad belts of papyrus, the straight green stalks of which, crowned by graceful, feathery heads, rise as high as twelve to fifteen feet. The papyrus grows so densely in places, that it is almost impossible to penetrate unless one follows the tunnels made by hippo when they come on land to feed during the night. Some of the lagoons are covered by a profusion of glorious water-lilies, varying in colour from deepest purple to delicate pink, and one could often see that most interesting bird, the lily-trotter, treading daintily with its long slender toes on the lily-pads, which support the elegant bird without sinking. A greater variety of bird-life is to be found on and around the shores of this lake than on any other I have seen in Africa, for one may see pelicans, Egyptian geese, cormorants, gulls, herons, egrets, white-headed fish-eagle, storks, water-hens, coots, plover, greebe, two varieties of king-fisher, spotted and red-billed, several kinds of duck, and a host of others, amongst which must be mentioned the crested crane, which is now becoming quite common around the shores and is easily approached. There are three things particularly striking about this bird—his amusing way of dancing, his mournful cry and, most of all, his exceedingly graceful flight.

At the time I explored Lake Naivasha, I met a Dane who lived on the shore, who certainly was a great character, with his own ideas of life. He built sailing boats, and often took me on expeditions to different parts of the lake. At Crescent Island I found cormorants nesting

in some dead trees which were protruding half way out of the water. I was able to study the various birds where they were feeding and nesting close to the shore from a "hide-up" at the top end of the lake. The "hide" consisted of a chair with very long legs made for me by my Danish friend, which we let into the lake, and covered up with reeds. I was greatly intrigued to watch the different methods employed by the various birds to obtain their food. For instance, the heron would wait motionless until an unwary frog came to the surface, when instantly his head would shoot forward and he secured his prey. But not far away a stork would obtain his dinner by quite a different method—it would shuffle its feet to and fro in the water to scare the frogs lying in the mud so that they came to the top, where they quickly shared the same fate.

There are some very large pythons in the papyrus, and one day whilst in my "hide-up", one passed close to me, going shorewards, and as I looked at it through my small peephole, it became magnified, and appeared to be a monster. In fact, at first I thought it was *the* Monster I had heard about from the natives; but, on rising and looking over the top of my hide, I saw that it was not more than twenty-five feet long. I was not afraid of the python, but felt very uncomfortable when I heard hippo grunting not very far away from where I was hiding. I then tried photographing from a covered-in boat, but found that when looking for some time through the peep-hole, I lost my balance and, as a result, turned turtle, which was not, by any means, a pleasant experience—thank God there were no crocodiles in this lake! After this, I moved right to the top of the lake, where my Danish friend said there were plenty of hippo, as he had shot several there some years ago, adding that I could easily find the place, as I should see the skulls.

However, after spending several days without finding the place he had mentioned, owing, no doubt, to the almost impenetrable belt of papyrus which had grown up, I went down to Naivasha to tell him that no such place existed as he had described. "Acht, you are no good, I come up and show you",[‡] he exclaimed; but when he came, he too was unable to find the place. However, I was not going to give up so easily, and on the way to look for the place again I came upon half a dozen hippo skulls, but they were over half a mile away from the papyrus; and then, purely by accident, I discovered the tunnel through which the hippo came to feed at night. I followed this, and by the time I reached the end of it was nearly up to my knees in mud, but was rewarded by finding a patch of water about a hundred yards wide in front of me, with at least a dozen hippo lying in it. Next day I had my boat carried there in an attempt to get a close-up of them in the middle of the pool. Unfortunately, however, an old bull turned very nasty—or was he playing?—for he jumped clean over a small floating island, and then dived under my boat. After he had done this twice, I began to see visions of myself being capsized, so beat a hasty retreat, and only just managed to get into shallow water in time. On the way back to my camp I went past the group of skulls once more, and then I understood why we had had difficulty in finding the place—the lake had receded so much. I fear that if the water continues to recede at its present rate, the beautiful lake will in a few years only be a small patch of water, which would be a disaster.

Whilst on my way round the lake last year, I visited Mr Connelly's charming home which is built on its shores; it is framed by natural beauty, for he had wisely retained the many magnificent trees indigenous to the country when laying out the grounds.

I have previously mentioned that trout have been introduced to the lake, and when we were invited to luncheon by Mr Connelly, we were able to enjoy delicious English trout freshly caught by our host from one of his fish enclosures; the taste was excellent and reminded me of my youthful days in the Yorkshire Dales. I was also delighted to see several very beautiful Kavirondo cranes strutting in front of the house, quite close to the shore, with their golden crests glistening in the sunlight.

As one walks by the side of the lake, animals that have come down to drink, such as water-buck, zebra and gazelle, rush across the road, whilst monkeys dash frantically along the ground and climb into the nearest mimosa tree, where they watch from their safe perch until one has gone by. At one part of the lake, not far from the road, there are some small volcanic hills, and *amongst them is a crater full of water, but, strangely enough, all the trees round the edge, and even those half way out of it, are dead, creating a truly weird atmosphere.*

I called it "The Lake of the Dead", for I could see no living thing there. The action of the atmosphere during hundreds of years had turned the curiously-shaped tree-trunks almost white, their dead branches stretching over the black, sinister-looking water like witches' arms. Soda deposits, accumulated through the years, have also whitened the shores of the crater, which, by contrast, tends to increase the gruesome blackness of the pool. In fact, had I seen the place in moonlight, I feel sure it would have looked like some stage-setting of a wizard's dwelling, wherein the grim rites of black magic were to be enacted.

Strangely enough, not far away—possibly a mile—hot springs have broken out. On my return to the roadway, I passed the holes of a colony of jumping hares. These

animals being nocturnal, I remember I used to enjoy stalking them to obtain flashlight photographs. They are attractive creatures, and have always reminded me of miniature kangaroos. That evening at the Hotel, I was shown a queer-looking spider at the end of an outhouse, which, they declared, went into a chrysalis stage during certain seasons of the year, but, alas, as my time was running short, I had no opportunity of studying it. The one place I particularly wanted to see was the so-called "Hell's Gate", which I referred to in connection with Rider Haggard's book. It is situated in the vast mountain which is a continuation of the extinct volcano, Mount Longonot, which partly separates the Great Rift Valley from Lake Naivasha. It is believed that in the days when the Rift Valley was nothing but a great lake, water rushed through this gorge. It is nearly three miles in length, and it was here that I nearly met my death. I was accompanied by my wife, two of our friends and a couple of native boys, and we had two cars between us. We started in the early morning, and after climbing the mountain by a rough track, we came to the entrance of the gorge, in the middle of which was a huge rock sentinel about sixty feet high, which I could well imagine being washed by many waters. On the right of me I caught sight of a rough native ladder, made from sisal poles, reared up against the volcanic cliffs, and I found it led to a gigantic bees' nest—the natives are very fond of honey and will risk almost any danger to secure it. I happened to look back towards the lake, and drew my party's attention to the magnificent view I had—shimmering water reflecting massive clouds, backed by a dark line of hills; it was truly wonderful. Despite its ominous name, the gorge proved to be a place of unusual quietness—an atmosphere of peace pervading everything, instilling in us all a feeling of extraordinary tranquillity. The

clouds were forming themselves into wonderful patterns to add to our feast of beauty, but they were really heralding a day of intense heat—it soon being 95 degrees in the shade. The track over which we travelled was of rough grass, burnt brown, and I could see that it was as dry as tinder, rising on each side to a height of four or five feet. The ravine widened to about a quarter of a mile, and was now bordered by cliffs towering upwards, five or six hundred feet high. The peaceful silence of this seemingly forgotten land was only broken occasionally by the squabbling of baboons on the rocks above us. Away in the distance, vultures were wheeling around one spot, indicating that a kill had been made there during the night. Now and then an animal, disturbed by our approach, would bound away through the long grass. The cliffs were pure white in places, and here nested vultures and eagles, flying in and out with sinister grace. We then rounded a bend of the snake-like gorge, and came in sight of the bottle-neck of the ravine, where the track ended suddenly. Just beyond lay thick impenetrable jungle, in which buffalo, rhino and many other dangerous creatures lurked, and I realised that, as we were unarmed, we must exercise caution. However, we could travel no further, and decided to have luncheon under the shade of the giant cliffs. From where I stood I could see, through my glasses, at least a dozen vultures' nests and also the nests of eagles, placed high in the cliff-side, in some of which I could see half-grown youngsters. It was while watching these fascinating birds returning to feed their young that I suddenly noticed, to my alarm, a huge column of smoke in the distance, rising high in the air. I felt sure it was in a direct line with the mouth of the gorge through which we had entered, but my companions assured me it was not; so, for the moment, the matter was forgotten, as I

became engrossed in trying to secure a photograph of the vultures. When, however, the time came for us to depart, and we were gathering our belongings together, our two native boys ran up excitedly calling "Bwana, Moto ! Moto !" which means "Fire ! Fire !", and they pointed to the column of smoke which was now clearly in line with the entrance to the gorge. We hastily made for the cars, anxious to ascertain if we were trapped and to see what chances we had of escaping. We drove at top speed towards the mouth, only to discover that the fire was advancing right across the ravine, rapidly consuming the long, dry grass and bush. Quickly returning, we *provided ourselves with branches, breaking them off* all the small bushes we could find, in the desperate hope of being able to beat out the advancing flames, but it was quickly evident that it was a hopeless task. A terrified buck bounded across the track in front of the car, symbolising the fear which was gripping our hearts, too, whilst a snake slid down the track at great speed. Several kongoni dashed across the ravine, halting to stare stupidly at the flames which were advancing relentlessly towards them. Up on the rocks, baboons were calling frantically, and above their terrified cries the crackling of burning grass and wood grew louder and louder.

Giant tongues of flame rose to twenty feet, the smoke twisting itself into the most terrifying shapes. The speed of the fire, having the breeze behind it, was incredible, and it was utterly impossible to approach the roaring sheet of flame as the heat grew unbearable. To make the situation even more dangerous, the breeze developed into a strong wind, so that the fire literally raced towards us, placing all of us in serious danger. We then attempted the difficult task of turning the cars round in the long grass, which concealed many small boulders, some of them being a foot and a half high, but

as there was no time to be lost, we worked frantically. At last, we managed to turn one car, and it was soon heading away from the inferno, but the second struck a rock, and before we could turn it round, the fire had reached to within fifteen yards of us, with the heat and smoke growing unbearable. By a miracle, we got the car clear, and drove rapidly after the first one. Looking back, I saw the smoke blown sideways for an instant—like a curtain being drawn, and behind it were scores of birds following the fire, apparently in search of food. Back we drove, down the ravine where we had just had lunch, and then we realised our plight was really desperate. I instantly decided we must make a barrage around ourselves and the cars, to save us from the flames, though, of course, we ran the risk of being suffocated in the dense smoke.

Everyone hurriedly broke off every available branch to be found, so as to beat out the fire we lit in small sections before us, making a barrier of a large patch of burnt-up grass between us and the advancing flames. This was a tricky business needing the utmost care, it being most nerve-racking to watch the inferno gaining on us, as we lit and beat out the smaller fires. After an hour of desperate work in the indescribable heat, blackened and scorched, we accomplished my plan, having succeeded in burning a clear space, about fifty feet wide, around the cars. That made a temporary island of safety, so we drove back down the ravine again to make another attempt to break through and beat the encroaching flames.

A small herd of animals were rushing wildly about, zigzagging across the open space in the long grass, bewildered by the roar of the flames, and undecided which way to go, whilst behind them swept mighty waves of fire and smoke, driven on, ever faster, by the

strong wind, leaving a blackened, desolate world behind it. The cries of frightened creatures driven from their homes pierced the air and terrified animals galloped past us madly. Vicious tongues of flame rose skywards, whilst pieces of burning grass floated towards us. With a dull continuous roar like an angry sea, the fire rolled nearer, now barely seventy yards away.

Once more we were driven back by the dense smoke which filled the entire ravine, blotting out the sun, even concealing the very fire itself. Whenever the smoke lifted for a few seconds, I could see vultures wheeling around their rocky homes, and when we were again beaten back to our island haven of burnt-out grass, we saw a troop of baboons jumping from rock to rock on the skyline formed by the cliff-top. They were all calling out in great excitement, whilst stones, which had been loosened by the jumping of the terrified creatures, began to fall dangerously near to us. Showers of small stones rained down to the wild accompaniment of their frantic cries—they thought, no doubt, that we were responsible for the flames. After they had gone, several kongoni rushed down the gorge past us, whilst a bush-buck bounded blindly over the track, almost crashing into us. I then caught a glimpse of a lion creeping furtively through the long grass, conscious no doubt that the raging inferno was striking a greater fear into the hearts of the beasts than he had ever aroused. Night was rapidly approaching, and, realising that soon we should be plunged into impenetrable darkness, we determined to make a last desperate attempt for safety—the only alternative being to risk traversing the narrow gorge on foot, which I knew to be very dangerous even in daylight when armed, and even more dangerous if unarmed and in the darkness. As we rounded a bend in the gorge, we found the fire was racing madly towards us, giant flames licking the cliffs on

either side. It seemed impossible to escape. We were confronted by a solid wall of flames. Our car lights could not even penetrate the dense smoke, so we had to drive onwards blindly, never knowing when we would crash into a stone, or sink into a hole.

Then something occurred which I shall never forget for the rest of my life. It was a miracle as wondrous as any I have ever read about—so amazing, that, for several seconds, I could hardly believe my eyes—for, as we approached the raging fire, which appeared even more terrifying in the darkness, the flames in the centre suddenly died down for a width of about twenty yards, until they were only about twelve inches high. To appreciate fully this amazing sight, one must remember that the fire rose to about fifteen feet in a great wall on either side. Apparently there was a lull in the wind in this patch, and we had arrived at just the right moment, the *only* moment if we were to escape being suffocated to death.

But we were not out of danger, for we had now to drive our cars for some distance through dense smoke, in appalling heat, and over flames a foot high, taking the risk of the petrol tanks igniting. However, we did not waste a moment, but drove as fast as possible through smoke and flame into the utter darkness beyond, but, thank God, into safety! Although the horrifying journey lasted but a few seconds, I shall always look back on it as one of the most terrifying experiences in my life.

And yet, looking back on this miraculous escape, I feel I have been privileged to know Nature in all her moods, for placidity and quiet sunlit beauty do not constitute the whole of life, whether in the human or in the animal kingdom. The devastating fire, therefore, revealed the anger of Nature—maybe righteous anger—

and showed how she enlists the aid of the wind to clear away her debris and dried-up bush from her endless garden. From anger she turns to calmness, presenting her charms again so as to bewilder mere man. Thus, whether in the sea or in the great forests and plains, Nature is never idle. Nor can the observer of her ever-changing moods complain of boredom in her company.

CHAPTER XIII

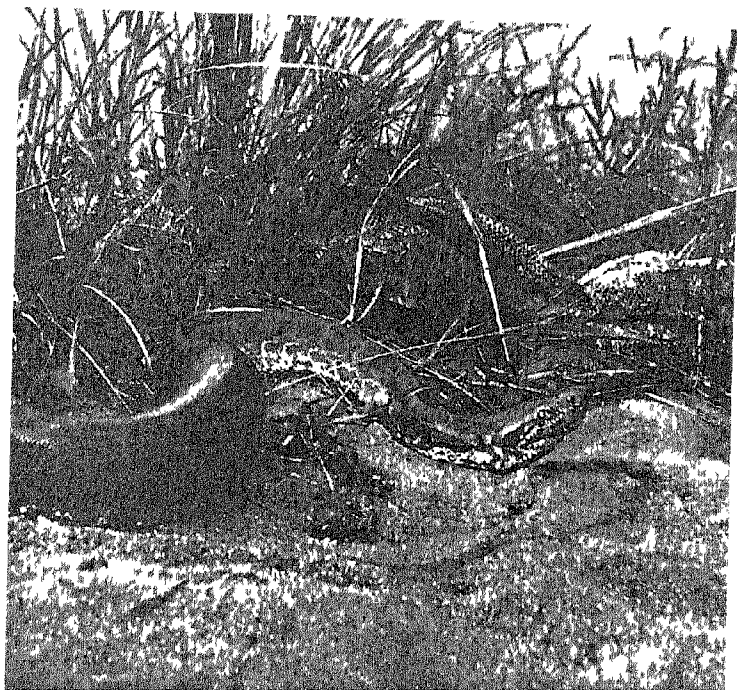
LAKE NAIVASHA TO LAKE NAKURU

"To pass the seas some think a toil;
Some think it strange abroad to roam,
Some think it grief to leave their soil,
Their parents, kinsfolk and their home.
Think so who list, I like it not;
I must abroad to try my lot."

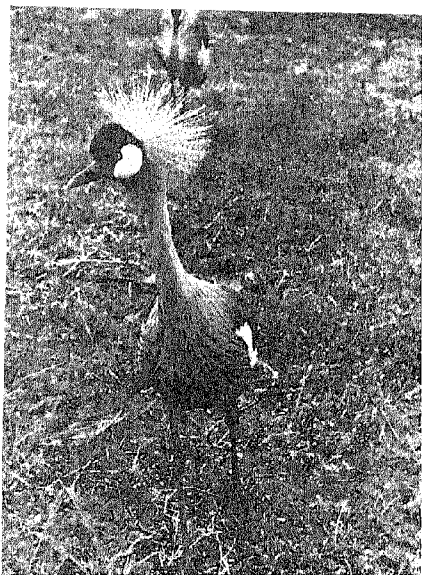
BARNABY GOOGE.

AFTER having slept off our terrifying experience of the day before, we rose early, and continued on our way as far as Lake Nakuru. Most of the journey was made over a good road—very different from the old track. At the top of the lake a new bridge has now been built over the river which runs into the lake at this point. I stopped to have a look at the old safari wooden bridge, which is still standing, and near which I had photographed a woodpecker going into one of the posts to feed its young.

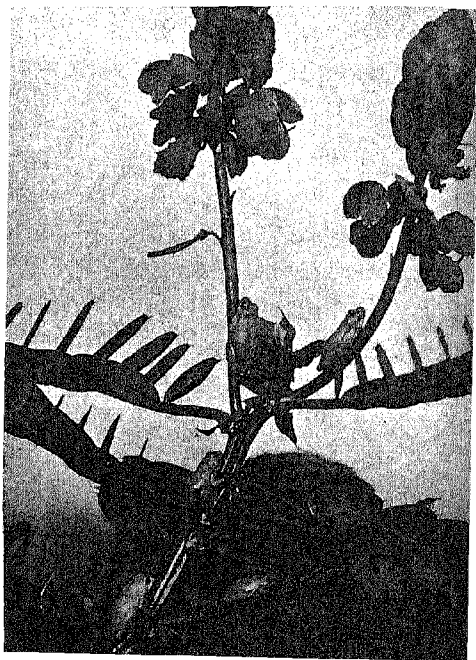
Whilst there, I saw a small species of hoopoe, and then remembered being shown a stump of a tree where these hoopoe nested some two miles higher up, near the Aberdare Mountains. Several sun-birds were flitting around not far from where I had previously photographed them as well, with their nest hanging on the end of a branch, jutting out over the river. These tiny and beautiful birds reminded me particularly of the Lyre-Bird of Australia, for they, too, have but one chick. As we proceeded, many kinds of birds were to be seen. Hawks waiting motionless on posts close to the road until we were almost alongside, then flying off, repeating the performance over and over again for nearly a mile.



THIS AFRICAN PYTHON HAS JUST SLOUGHED ITS SKIN



THE KAVIRONDO CRANE
IS THE POSSESSOR OF A
BEAUTIFUL GOLDEN CREST



SMALL TREE FROGS ON
THE SHORES OF LAKE
NAIVASHA

Plover rose from the ground uttering their plaintive cry, whilst in the distance about half a dozen gazelle stared at the car. They were evidently the remnants of the great herds I remember seeing at this place when the country was not in the hands of the settler. At this point, the road ran close to the railway track, which we had to cross when we reached Gilgil, and as we drew nearer, I saw an engine with a few trucks slowly moving along; I soon discovered why, as there were two natives sitting on the cow-catcher, each armed with an improvised broom vigorously sweeping off the rails thousands of locusts in the "hopper" stage—that is, before they grow wings; and soon our car was slithering along through a moving mass of these unpleasant creatures. I had been in Kenya when a train was stopped by hordes of caterpillars, but driving through locusts was a new experience for me. We came across dense patches of them, here and there, for about a mile, and they gave one the impression that the land was moving. I felt truly sorry for the settlers and natives in the district, for when these insects got their wings, they would destroy everything green in the country. On our right rose the Aberdare Mountains, which I have crossed several times when going northwards to Mount Kenya or to Abyssinia. These mountains contain a wealth of beauty, the great Thompson Falls, and the plains of Laikipi. The lakes and forests are no longer in the wilds as I knew them years ago, but are studded with homesteads, and roads take the place of the old tracks.

The top of a hill is then reached, from which one is able to look down upon an exceedingly curious bit of country. In front is the beautiful Lake of Elmenteita, and to the left of it lie the Eburru Hills, where many steam jets rise out of the lava, emitting sulphurous fumes which are reminders that here is a link with the past, when the

Great Rift Valley was but a heaving volcanic mass, spouting fire and lava. In the valley, little volcanic hills, cone-shaped, appear, giving the impression that at one time this could have been nothing but a blazing inferno, and yet geologists have found traces of bygone beaches at Gilgil, and say that the Great Rift Valley was once one of the largest enclosed areas of water in the great continent.

Leaving this wonderful, yet strange-looking scenery, we suddenly drove into bare, bleak country, and shortly afterwards were able to look down on the little township of Nakuru in the distance, surrounded by trees.

Nakuru can claim at least two interesting features. First, there is the great crater of Menengai, with its vast cavity, which in some parts is over eight miles wide, once more revealing the terrible past of this valley. Second, by contrast, stretched out below us away to the left, lie the peaceful waters of a lake, famed for the millions of flamingoes which dwell there, their plumage creating a blaze of pink, fading into pale coral against the pure white line of the shores, gleaming in the sunlight. Combined with billowy clouds and undulating hills in the background, they make a picture one cannot easily forget.

Some way beyond the road, I noticed a couple of tents and several natives at work; at first I was interested, but afterwards dismissed the matter from my mind, as I came to the conclusion that it was a party digging for gold. When I got to Nakuru, I at once went to the lake to revive memories of the many times I had visited it in the past. Here again I found another change, for like Lake Naivasha, it, too, had greatly receded. The shores are bare and covered by a white deposit of soda, which leads one to believe it is solid ground. I was informed, however, that only a fortnight previously a car-driver, thinking he could give his passengers a better view of the flamingoes, went too close to the water, and suddenly

the car started to sink, and it was not long before it had disappeared completely !

When you approach the lake, the birds are all busy feeding near the shore, but as you get closer, they retreat, making a peculiar clattering noise as they go; this is caused, I think, by their feet, as they have to walk about thirty yards in shallow water before they can start swimming. Although they leave the shore, the millions of birds do not take flight, but rest on the water about eighty to a hundred yards away, presenting a truly wonderful sight. If one keeps perfectly still, as I have done, for several hours, they will gradually come back and start feeding close to the shore again. However, the greatest spectacle of all is presented when this great gathering takes to the air, resembling a pink cloud most fascinating to behold, truly expressing the poetry of motion. As the birds leave the water they make an indescribable sound, growing in volume as they rise gracefully into the air, circling slowly around, and then descending on practically the same spot, or perhaps a hundred yards away. Indeed, they offer one of the most amazing sights to be seen in Africa, but one wonders how they all get a living !

Flamingoes have long legs and long necks, and when they are feeding they plunge their extremely peculiar bills upside down into the mud, to rake the bottom for food, and having filled their bills, they then sieve what they have brought up, and consume the residue, which is very minute. Although millions of them are generally at Nakuru, they nest a little farther north, at Lake Hannington. There are also hippo in the lake, but unfortunately they are very shy. There are no fish to be found here.

That night I met an old friend at the hotel who told me I had made a mistake in not visiting Dr. Leakey,

who had just unearthed some interesting relics and was camped just outside the town. It then flashed through my mind that this must have been the camp I had passed on the previous day. Next morning, I retraced my steps and visited the camp, to be most cordially greeted by Dr and Mrs Leakey, who were unearthing skeletons and skulls, implements and weapons, pottery, and jewellery worn thousands of years ago, beautifully fashioned opal, jade, and beads. All these things, found during the unearthing of a prehistoric burial site, go to prove that in the so-called "dark ages" the inhabitants of Africa were far in advance of the present-day natives.

Looking down upon the skeletons embedded in the earth, I learnt something of the work being done by this young couple, and it seemed only fitting that Dr Leakey, who was born in East Africa, should undertake this praiseworthy attempt to unravel some of the mysteries of the country's past. For many years, during my travels in Africa, I had realised something of the magnificence of its past ages, and therefore it was no great surprise to me to be shown the most interesting relics Dr Leakey had unearthed. During some of my past expeditions I had often remarked to my companions that, in my opinion, the Egyptians had been in the country at some very early date, and I felt that the Romans had been there as well. However, this great and mysterious past is now being unfolded by these two enthusiastic workers, and their efforts will contribute to our knowledge of this ancient civilisation.

It seems strange to recollect that in 1857 Livingstone, wondering whether the African elephant could be tamed, found the answer to his problem through his friend Admiral Smyth, in whose collection of relics were two brass medals, struck in A.D. 197, which bore a picture of "Faustina" and "Septimus Severus" — two tame

African elephants which had been brought to Rome. To-day I learn that the King of the Belgians is having elephants tamed once more in the Congo.

From the day I entered Africa, although my interest has primarily been in the present and the beauties of Nature and her creatures, I have always been fully conscious of the historic associations of the country, and have believed that it held untold secrets of past human effort. In later years when I happened to be at Broken Hill in Rhodesia, I saw the now famous skull, which had then just been brought to light, and which I was able to photograph; and my interest was naturally still further sharpened when later the experts declared it to be thousands of years old. Yet, if one remembers that an expedition was sent from Egypt to East Africa in 611 B.C., it is not surprising that wonderful articles are now being unearthed. In ancient times a scholarly librarian of Alexandria made a sketch of the Nile beyond Khartoum, and even suggested the probability of great lakes in the interior; and Aristotle wrote of "men with dogs' faces" and of the pigmy peoples who conducted a constant war with ostriches. All that goes to show that Africa had not been completely untouched by the earlier civilisations, although for centuries this continent, with its many strange creatures, remained practically unknown. Now, however, the veil of mystery is gradually being lifted by explorers, and the amazing wealth of its natural resources is being revealed for the benefit of the rest of the world.

The names of men like Livingstone and Stanley stand out on the roll of the great explorers, yet strangely enough, Livingstone never entered Kenya or Uganda, although it is commonly thought that he did. Only recently a film was made of the lives of Livingstone and Stanley, the greater portion of which was taken not more

than ten miles from the Uganda railway, where neither of the two had ever set foot !

I am afraid that the average person thinks of Africa as just "South Africa", simply because it has been developed and populated and its beauties advertised to the rest of the world, and never takes into account the vast size of this huge continent.

Livingstone's addition to the British Empire was Nyasaland, the result of his expedition in 1859, and in 1867 he reached Tanganyika. It is said that the chief object of his subsequent journeys in East Africa—that is, those undertaken during the years from 1865 until his death in 1873—was to prove his theory that Speke's discovery of the Nile's source was, in his own words, "a mistaken view". As a matter of fact, he wrote: "Old Nile played the theorists a pretty prank by having its springs five hundred miles south of them all." At the time Stanley found Livingstone in 1871, he was not far from Lake Tanganyika, and was still looking for the springs; and right up to the time of his death, he never abandoned the search. His belief was that Lake Bangweolo was the highest source, and it was on the shores of this lake that he died. To my mind, Livingstone's greatest work, insofar as East Africa is concerned, was the daily record in his Journal, which revealed the internal slave trade in this part of the country—information which roused England to action.

Over thirty years ago, my old friend Binks, a fellow native of Yorkshire, and a pioneer studio-photographer in Nairobi, presented me with Joseph Thompson's revolver and four cartridges; it was a most formidable weapon with two barrels, one above the other, built by Lancaster. Shortly afterwards, Binks asked me if I would like Livingstone's medicine-chest. I felt I could accept Thompson's revolver as authentic, but it was too

much to believe that Livingstone's medicine-chest was still in existence, and so I said no more about it. However, only last year when I was returning home from Central Africa, whilst in conversation with a gentleman from Nairobi, who was on board the boat, I happened to tell him the above story, and I was quite taken aback when he calmly informed me that the medicine-chest *was* still in existence, and as a matter of fact he himself discovered it whilst he was clearing up in the old medical stores department! There was no doubt as to its genuineness, and it was in a museum in London; I was dumbfounded.

For years, no one in the outer world knew anything of East Africa except around the coast-line, and then only for the purpose of trading in slaves, ivory and gold; and for a long time the tales told by travellers about mountains like Kilimanjaro and Mount Kenya were thought to be flights of imagination, and those who should have been interested enough to find out the truth for themselves, poured scorn on the possibility of snow-capped mountains in the tropics. In fact, one critic, thinking himself to be cleverer than the rest, had the audacity to publish a book in which he demonstrated how mistaken they were in respect of what they *thought* they had seen! It is amazing to think that when John Hannington Speke endeavoured to obtain information to assist him on his journey up-country in 1857, he could only find the Hindu Puranas, compiled a thousand years before Christ. Fortunately, he managed to obtain a sketch map made by the missionary Erhardt in 1856, although this was, of course, drawn up from hearsay gleaned from coastal traders.

It was not until the nineteenth century that a true picture of the interior began to unfold itself, although the British had occupied Mombasa for a short time (1824-28) after the Portuguese had been driven South.

Credit for being the first explorer of Kenya must go to a German named Johann Ludwig Krapf, who was in the employ of the Church Missionary Society, and stationed at Mombasa in 1844. He and a colleague named Rebmann made several daring journeys up-country and discovered Kilimanjaro and Mount Kenya, and although afterwards he made another journey to the Tana River, he never penetrated as far as the Great Rift Valley; but it was Erhardt who supplied the map which Speke used on the journey when he achieved the distinction of being the first European to reach Lake Victoria Nyanza, the feat being commemorated by a monument erected in his honour in Kensington Gardens in London.

Speke and Sir Richard Burton reached as far as Lake Tanganyika in the early part of 1858, travelling by the route from Zanzibar, which, for the next twenty-five years, was used by other explorers for getting to Central Africa and Uganda, through what is now known as Tanganyika. Burton became ill on the journey, and was left at Kaze. Speke went on alone to the "Ukerewe Sea" as the natives called Lake Victoria, arriving there on July 30th, and it was here that he discovered the now famous Ripon Falls, the source of the Nile, although his discovery was discredited. However, to place the matter beyond all doubt, he left England again in 1860 on another expedition, accompanied this time by Captain J. A. Grant. They took the same route as before, and reached Uganda in 1863. It is difficult to realise that this happened only seventy-eight years ago! They were at the Ripon Falls by July 21st, thus confirming Speke's original discovery and settling at last the question of the true source of the Nile. They were also able to identify Ruwenzori as the Mountains of the Moon. It must not be forgotten that for centuries attempts had been made to trace the source of the Nile by following its course from

the mouth, but they had always been impeded by insurmountable difficulties in the way, chiefly the cataracts and the sudd.

A Belgian named Adolph Linaut had travelled, in 1827, one hundred and fifty miles beyond Khartoum, and in 1839 another explorer, Thibaut, reached as far as Mongolla. Then in 1848 a man named Knoblecher, who was attached to an Austrian Roman Catholic Mission, managed to penetrate as far as Rejaf. But the honour of being the first man to trace the Nile all the way from mouth to source fell to Sir Samuel Baker, and it was he also who discovered Lake Albert.

The tragic death of Speke, and the wars in which the so-called civilised world was now plunged, slowed down the activities of explorers for the next thirteen years, and it was not until H. M. Stanley made his famous journey across Africa that the adventurous spirit once more stirred in Europe.

It seems strange to us to-day to know that, when the Sultan of Zanzibar was conversing with Speke, he expressed surprise that he was not using the direct route across the Masai country and Usoga, which is now, of course, the route taken by the railway. But we must remember that at that time the various tribes inhabiting this part of the country, including the Masai, were notorious for their inhospitality. In this connection great credit is due to the Royal Geographical Society for organising and financing an expedition that enabled this direct route to be used; for they sent out a young and highly successful explorer, Joseph Thompson, who contributed to the opening-up of Africa by his now famous book "Through Masai Land", which he wrote on returning from an expedition over the highlands of Kenya to Lake Victoria in 1883. Just how difficult his feat was can be imagined when it is known that a German, Dr

Fisher, started *before* Thompson, but turned back after he had reached Lake Naivasha.

Knowing the strong objection the King of the tribes in Uganda had to visitors, Thompson wisely did not enter his country. In spite of having received this warning, a later explorer, Bishop Hannington, entered Uganda, and was murdered.

Following Thompson's original route, Count Teleki made further discoveries, including Lake Rudolph, and he was able to draw up some of the most accurate maps of the country.

It was not until 1888 that a charter was granted to the Imperial British East Africa Company, after it had been decided that the pioneering and exploring work was substantially completed. Nevertheless, even after this, numerous expeditions and journeys into remote regions were made by the first officers of the Company, for it was realised that this extraordinary continent had by no means given up all her secrets. One of the most notable of these journeys was made by Sir Frederick Jackson up the Tana River and to the Kavirondo country in 1889, and another was that of Lugard across the Highlands to Uganda in 1890. These were followed by Hobley and others in 1891, and later still by some Railway and Survey officers.

I have known most of the great men I have mentioned; and I also knew Sir John Kirk, who accompanied Livingstone, and Dr Karl Peters, who attempted to out-flank the British Company by following Sir Frederick Jackson up the Tana River in 1890. Peters pulled down Jackson's flags and tore up the treaties he had made with native chiefs, but these efforts were nullified by the Anglo-German Agreement.

Most of these explorers were personal friends of mine, and their genius and resoluteness always inspired me when

I was formulating my own plans. In my youth I had been fired with a keen desire to travel. The destination did not matter, provided the journey seemed long and dangerous and took me to remote parts. All my spare pennies were spent on travel books and magazines, and the adventures of the early explorers were food and drink to me. Most certainly I too was going to explore, for I wanted to discover the secrets of Nature, to draw nearer and nearer to that world of dumb creatures which, from my earliest recollections, had fascinated me, and in which I seemed to feel at home. Of course, I wanted to travel beyond the English countryside—to explore jungles into which no white man had penetrated and find out for myself facts which might well prove of benefit to mankind as a whole. There is an old Hebrew proverb, known, no doubt, to all the great explorers of the world, “If I had not lifted up the stone, you had not found the jewel.”

That always impressed me, and made me realise even more clearly how much civilisation depends upon, and has benefited by, the bravery of those who carried the torch, alone, into the unknown.

My course, however, was altered by my devotion to cameras, for they brought me more and more to the close study of Nature photography, and distracted me from my earlier ambition to explore unknown parts. Consequently, until 1900, I was photographing every possible phase of Nature and her creatures, all over the British Isles, becoming the father of Nature Photography, and only then did I make my first journey into Africa. Thereafter, my first ambition to explore, coupled with my unquenchable curiosity over the wonders of Nature, led me along the path of exploration after all.

To-day, having encircled the globe several times, and penetrated into many places where no humans have ever

been, I can fairly claim to have achieved my schoolboy's dream.

And yet to-day I am still far from satisfied, and want to start all over again ! That is due to Nature's tantalising way of keeping one in suspense, revealing but a few of her wonders at a time and leaving one always wanting to see more.

“Thou, who hast given me eyes to see
And love this sight so fair,
Give me a heart to find out Thee,
And read Thee everywhere.”

KEBLE.

CHAPTER XIV

NAKURU TO UGANDA

" Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal silence."

WORDSWORTH.

AFTER wandering for so many miles through the Rift Valley on the way to Uganda and the Congo, the road then leads over the great valley wall, or Escarpment, which rises tier upon tier, and were it not for the fascination of the ever-changing scenery and the teeming bird-life, which distracts attention from the arduous climb, I imagine the summit would seem almost beyond reach. As one climbs upwards through a world of dense forests, bush, streams and open country, the air is filled with the shrill cries of parrots. This, at first, surprised me, for the altitude was high, and the temperature cold, but then I remembered how, when I was camped, some years ago, high up on the Aberdare Mountains, I had watched flocks of parrots arriving from the plains far below, to roost in the bamboo trees as evening approached.

Nature seems to have collected all her charms, and strewn them over this wonderful place with even greater generosity than usual, and as one rises to the top of the Escarpment, the scenery grows more and more beautiful. And then man's ingenuity asserts itself in the form of the railway, for through this isolated region a heavy train comes thundering past, all the way from Mombasa, a distance of over five hundred and fifty miles. At this point the railway reaches an altitude of nine thousand one hundred and fifty feet above sea-level, which is higher

than any other railway has been carried in the British Empire—a startling feat of engineering in a tropical country.

Further evidence of human progress meets the eye in farmsteads and saw-mills tucked away in the forests. The fields were so white as to resemble snow, and this puzzled me, for though I had been travelling for years by mule or car, I had never seen anything like it. I discovered that in these fields there were crops of giant daisies, having white petals with dark centres—the flower called *Pyrethrum*, from which the famous insecticide is made. This plant can only be grown at a high altitude, and at one time was only to be found in Japan. Here was a rapidly growing industry, and I learned that the *pyrethrum* flowers grown on these highlands are twenty-five per cent. better than those grown in Japan. The insecticide produced by this wonderful flower has a deadly effect on flies and mosquitoes and has proved an invaluable boon not only to people at home, but even more to those living in the Tropics.

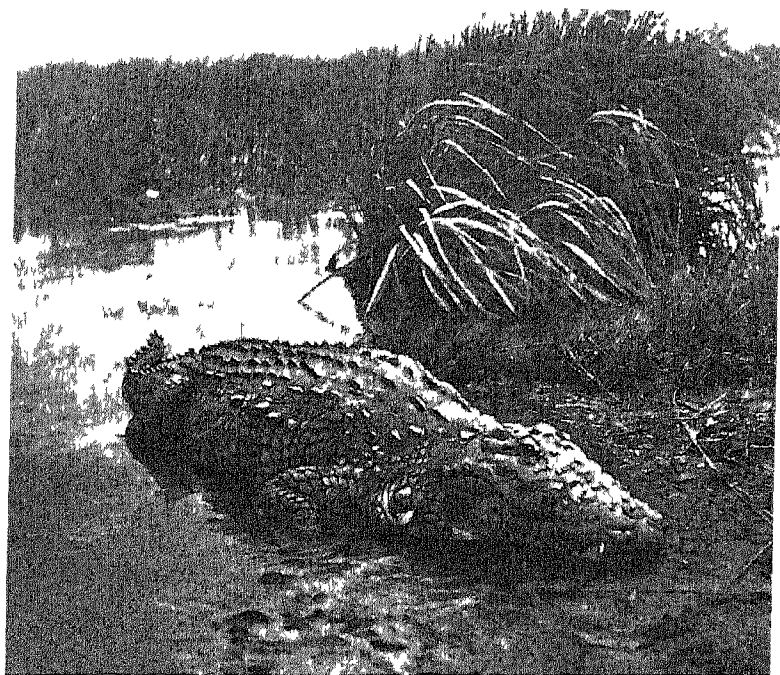
It was not long before we reached the Uasin Gishu plateau, and as we commenced to cross the plains to Eldoret, I was reminded of an experience I had many years ago at this spot. I was riding a mule, and got caught by the sudden nightfall, when a lion began to grunt, and kept pace with me only a short distance from the road. Most of the time he let me know of his presence, whilst another lion in the distance roared ceaselessly, shattering the darkness, and spreading terror to all living things within earshot. The mule was very nervous and, of course, wanted to bolt, and I was armed only with a Colt automatic, but I kept up a loud conversation with the mule, imitating two voices, thinking I would deceive the lion by making him believe there were several people about. This was a tip an old hunter had given me, for

lions in the wilds do not like the human voice. The ruse worked, for after a little while the lion left me, and I heard his grunt growing fainter and fainter, whilst his roaring companion stopped altogether. Nevertheless, I kept my eyes open; but I was delighted when I saw a light in the distance, denoting a small hotel, where I stayed the night. It had its funny side, of course, for who would imagine that carrying on a spirited conversation with a mule would prove a protection? Fortunately, the mule gave no back answers!

Crossing the wide plains, which now form a large Dutch settlement, I noted the disappearance of many of the animals. Many species are still there, of course, but only a few can be seen from the road. One has to go a little farther off the track, which is easily accomplished in a car, to points across the plains. For instance, in the forests of the hills there are plenty of animals, elephant, buffalo and leopard, whilst at the foot of the hills there are giraffe, lion, zebra and gazelle. Eldoret, which I knew when it was a little dorp, has now grown into a town. My native driver asked if I wished to take the new road to Uganda which went part of the way past the Kakamega Gold Mines, but, after a moment's hesitation, I decided to go by the old road past Mount Elgon, which is 13,870 feet high and is noted for its cave-dwellers. I remembered digging for diamonds in 1921, and I now thought of the men I should see frantically scraping up the ground in a quest as hopeless as mine had been. In Nairobi, I had heard from men who were forming companies with capital running into hundreds of thousands of pounds glowing accounts of the fortunes they were to make; but I rather think that most of the gold would be in the offices of the companies, and very little in the ground. Numerous titbits of private information were given me in Nairobi, but all fell on deaf ears, as I

had paid a good price for my experience in gold mining in my youthful days. Still, it is most strange how the word "gold" affects the human mind, even in the most hardened cases. I knew one unlucky man who had been bitten many times, and yet he still falls to the bait. Fortunately, he is well blessed with this world's goods and so it does not unduly worry him. One strange thing in life I have noticed is that the man with money, whether he has made it or inherited it, will invariably listen to, and finance, the humbug, but seldom will he assist the honest man. Why? I often ask. Of course, it is due to the glib tongue of the humbug, and the convincing way he talks of huge profits being a certainty, and all the rest of it.

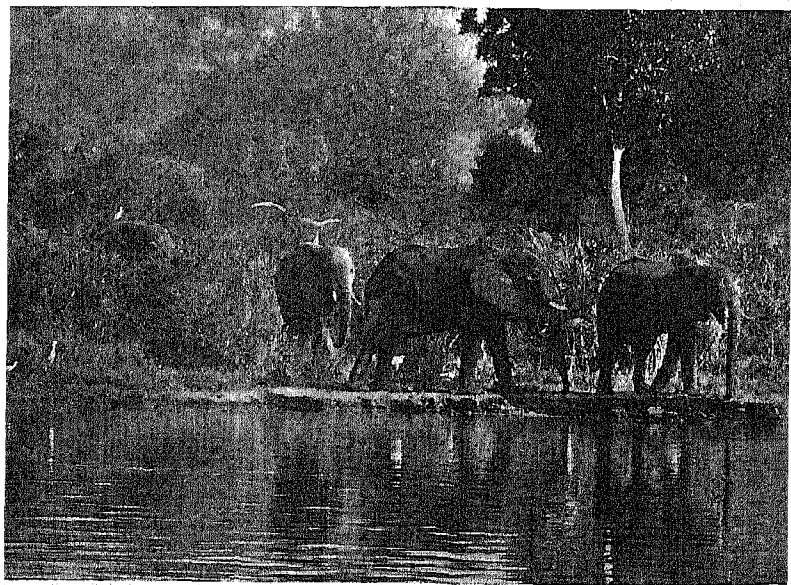
I shall never forget an incident of many years ago. I was introduced to a gentleman in the West End of London, and in the course of our conversation I told him that my forefathers knew a great deal about lead mines. "Well," he said, "that is strange, for I have just bought a lead mine in Wales," and he took a small piece of ore from his waistcoat pocket. He then showed me several more specimens, and unconsciously I must have put one piece in my pocket. I did not wear that suit again until some months later, when I was in Nairobi. I happened to be chatting to a friend in the hotel saloon bar when I felt a hard substance in my pocket, and remembered this specimen piece of ore. I was rather surprised, but realised how it had got there, and said to my friend, "What do you think of that for a bit of lead ore?" intending, of course, to explain how it got into my pocket; but before I could do so, a man standing close by butted in, and said excitedly, "Where did you find that?" Seeing a joke in the offing, I replied, "Ah, that's telling!" But his interest was fired, and he wanted to pay for drinks, and when I declined, he talked about a wonderful place he knew of with plenty of animals, and followed this up



LUTEMBE, THE SACRED CROCODILE OF LAKE VICTORIA



THE RIVER WAS SIMPLY ALIVE WITH HIPPO, EVERY FEW MILES
BRINGING TO US HERDS OF HUNDREDS



HERONS FREQUENTLY ACCOMPANY ELEPHANTS TO THE WATER. A SCENE TAKEN

in the most innocent way by asking me casually where I had last been on safari. However, I did not enlighten him, and later I was just in time to see him stop my personal "boy" in the street, but before he could get into conversation with him, I arrived on the scene. Three days later, I went on safari again, and—would you believe it?—that man followed me for several days, which just goes to show how a man will grasp at a straw. On my return to Nairobi I saw him again, and thought it was time to explain the joke, telling him what a long trek he would have had if he had followed me to the source of that lead ore, as it came from a little mine in Wales. I know he would have liked to tell me what was in his mind, but I was bigger than he, so he contented himself with a grunt, and walked off down the street a sadder and wiser man !

Soon after leaving Eldoret, one meets the Nandi tribe, who resemble the Masai in many ways—in language, dress and weapons, and also in their manner of living. Like the Masai, they have for long killed man-eating lions and lions that attack their cattle, with spears. This is always a risky adventure, but they are not afraid to engage in it, since it is the only method they now have of proving their manhood and winning fame and glory. They perform the same dance as the Masai after they have killed a lion—raising their shields above their heads as they march round and round the dead body with a peculiar half-step gait and chant the deep-toned song of victory. The only difference is that when engaged in a life and death struggle with a lion, they have a large number of men—about ninety—who make a ring round the lion and gradually close in until they are within a few yards of it, the lion then charging and mauling those he knocks down; whereas the Masai dash upon the lion in semicircular formation.

To be with the Masai, as I have been, with my camera only, is an experience that few men have ever had. When I was with them on a man-eating lion hunt, there were never more than nine men in the fight. In the four weeks I spent with Berkley Cole, who was in charge of the Masai and knew them and their language well, we killed five man-eaters, and during that time every man of the nine was mauled except myself, which was entirely due, I feel sure, to my keeping perfectly still, the only movement being that of my hand turning my cinematograph camera, which I kept carefully shielded.

As to our journey, the roads were poor, and we had bumped along in glorious sunshine, but suddenly the scene changed, as the sun became obscured, and looking back towards Mount Elgon, I saw gigantic clouds gathering and merging together, ever growing larger, and the sound of rushing wind drew nearer—signs which told me Mount Elgon was menaced by a storm. Now huge black clouds encircled it, whilst vivid lightning played through them, and so we drove at full speed to escape it, for to be enveloped in one of those storms is something to be avoided. On a former occasion I had been caught, and have never forgotten the experience—inky darkness, rain literally emptied from the clouds, blinding lightning that seemed to link earth and sky, the car slithering backwards and forwards across the road in a foot of water. In this instance, however, we were lucky enough to leave the storm behind, and run into sunshine again.

To enter Uganda is to pass into a land of tropical beauty, for there is much more moisture in the air, and as a result, the vegetation changes to palms, long grass, luxurious foliage, far larger banana plantations, and so on. The natives, too, are more advanced than in Kenya, being extremely intelligent and courteous, and they

readily adapt themselves to Christian teachings, Christianity being dominant amongst them.

Uganda is essentially a black man's country, differing in this respect from Kenya, and the results which the missionaries — whether Protestant or Catholic — have achieved are amazing. The men love to march about in long white robes like old-fashioned nightshirts, whilst the women wear plenty of material of contrasting colours, draped almost in Grecian style and arranged most artistically. If a native is at all wealthy, he dresses up his lady love in yards and yards of coloured silk, and if he is poor, she has to be content with an odd remnant.

Every mile of the journey brought an experience of some sort, novel, dangerous, or amusing. We ran over a snake which, for some extraordinary reason, was quite unhurt after the car wheels had passed over it. This reminded me of two friends who ran over a seven-foot-long black mamba, which rose up as the car touched it, struck, and just missed one of them. On looking back, they saw to their horror it was following them, but they outdistanced it, despite the speed at which it was travelling. I think it is better to be chased by an elephant than to meet a snake, for an elephant is easily seen, whereas if you run over a snake it is hard to tell whether it is not still entangled in the car, and one has to decide whether to get out, go on, or what !

We arrived at a native village, the inhabitants of which seemed to be having a Crazy Week, for the whole place was "decorated" with odd bits of calico by way of flags, whilst all were beating tin cans, waving their arms about, jumping, yelling, banging into each other, and generally creating a frightful din. I soon discovered that the reason for all this eccentric behaviour was clouds of locusts flying across the roadway and settling on the banana plantations which provided the chief food

of these natives. The whole village was darkened by the swarm, just as if the sky were filled again by thunder clouds such as we had escaped from near Mount Elgon.

On and on came the vast, endless swarm, destroying all in its path; and the cries of the natives were pitiful to hear. I was fortunate to secure a photograph of the locusts, thus recording one of the many tragedies which occur in this strange land of contrasts. Only a few miles farther on we saw a funny sight—a number of almost naked natives dancing, so plastered over with wood ashes that they appeared white in their scanty clothing. They appeared to have an instructor who from time to time stopped them and shouted orders, as if he were drilling a platoon. They were quite ignorant of the tragedy that had overtaken their neighbours only a few miles away.

As we ran smoothly downwards over a well-made road—Uganda being famed for its good surfaces—it soon became evident that motorists are all the same the whole world over, with the same proportion of careless drivers, for first, we saw a lorry that had evidently got the worst of an encounter with a heavier vehicle, being badly smashed and lying half-way across a ditch; and then, a little farther along, we came to a patch of forest country, and at a sharp bend half-way down a hill we saw two fine saloon cars lying across the road, locked together, having apparently met each other face to face. It is a curious fact that when motor-cars first appeared, the natives, just like the animals, would run in front of the vehicle until it was almost on top of them, when they would throw themselves sideways into a wide ditch—often full of water!

One native, who had just been trained to drive a lorry, was out on his first run when he saw in front of him a native on foot. To show off, he hooted, and the boy

bolted as hard as he could go. The native driver accelerated, and just when he was almost on top of him, the boy swerved, but so intent was the driver that he swerved too, with the result that he not only killed the boy, but smashed his lorry up as well. It was particularly tragic, because the driver had no malicious intentions, being prompted to act in this stupid way just for the fun of the thing. Many of the native drivers, most of them indeed, are extremely good and careful, and quite different from some of the Indian drivers in Kenya and Uganda, who can afford high-powered cars and often drive most recklessly, monopolising most of the road.

I was glad when we arrived at the little township of Jinja, to stay close to the Ripon Falls at the Ibis Hotel, which I found was still being managed by Mrs. Sewell, whom I have known for many years. She was one of the earliest settlers in Kenya, where she farmed in the Great Rift Valley. The next time I saw her, she was managing the hotel which used to be the old Government House at Entebbe, and it was here she started collecting the beetles of Uganda, her remarkable collection including some *very large specimens, most of them beautifully coloured*. She used to employ natives to go far into the forests to collect these insects; they were carefully set up in little glass-fronted cases, and she sold surplus specimens to visitors.

When I first saw the Ripon Falls, I was rather disappointed, for I had expected them to be vast and spectacular, in keeping with so great a river as the Nile. Instead, I saw what appeared to be a dam at the end of a horseshoe formation in the lake, which, on closer examination, proved to be about twenty feet in width and composed of rock, and seemed to have burst in several places to a width of about fifteen feet, the water thus rushing through and falling a mere twelve feet. I sat

down on the bank, gazing at the scene, and thought of all the men who had struggled for years and braved so many hardships to discover what now seemed to be such a very poor beginning for so great a river. I can easily understand the disappointment of explorers like Livingstone and their disbelief in the claim that this unimposing scene was the source of the mighty Nile. Nor can I make out why the source of the Kagera River, which runs into Lake Victoria, or even that of the Semliki River, which runs from Lake Edward into Lake Albert, should not with equal justice be regarded as the source of the Nile, for a glance at the map reveals that these rivers could just as easily be so regarded, since the present Nile runs into Lake Kioga and then on to Lake Albert, and in distance these other sources are much longer, the one through the Semliki being one hundred miles farther South, and the Kagera River two hundred miles farther South. And, as I have said, I am not surprised that Livingstone was unconvinced that Speke's claim was justified, and it is sad to think he died trying to disprove it. I know the Kagera River and also the Semliki, and Lake Edward has a forty-mile river running into it at its southern end which brings one on a level with the centre of Lake Victoria; but the Kagera River begins about thirty miles inland from the southern end of Lake Victoria, and runs parallel with Lake Victoria for a hundred and twenty miles before entering it, almost at the centre of the lake.

Lake Victoria, which is only 3,726 feet above sea-level, is two hundred and fifty miles long and one hundred and fifty miles wide, having a coastal line of one thousand eight hundred miles. It is noted for both the quantity and the quality of its fish. I have travelled right round this vast inland sea, marvelling at the varied sunsets reflected on its lonely waters, and, by day, I have sailed

past many of its beautiful green and forest-clad islands, which present some of the loveliest pictures imaginable.

A decade ago the islands were thronged with tribes of fisher-folk, until out of the depths of the mysterious Congo forests crept that dreaded disease, sleeping sickness, which was responsible for the death of 150,000 people throughout this area. Sleeping sickness is carried by a biting fly about the size of the common house-fly, with grey crossed wings similar to those of the tse-tse, and its bite is fatal to the domestic animal. Fortunately for Uganda, medical science has now, to a very great extent, overcome its dangers. Although I have been bitten by it many times in the Congo forests, whilst its victims were dying all around me, I have always miraculously escaped infection. Two phenomena occur on this lake, which, at times, can be very dangerous—waterspouts and plagues of flies.

During the war I happened to be recrossing the lake after fighting at Bukoba, and I pointed out to my Colonel a vast black cloud advancing, over a mile in width, and he could not believe me when I explained it was a mighty army of small flies. As they drew close the sky became darkened, and then there was a vivid flash of lightning, followed by a terrific crash of thunder. For a few seconds we were submerged in inky blackness, and had to slow down, for ships accompanying us were entirely blotted from view. In about ten minutes the cloud had passed and it became light again, but the deck was littered with millions of small flies, which kept the soldiers busy for some time sweeping them overboard. A month after this incident, my duties again took me to the lake, and I remember hoping the crossing would be calm, for all the Government steamers which had been in action had the glass removed from the portholes, which did not matter, of course, when the weather was

fine, but this great lake can work itself up into a fury comparable to an ocean storm, and it becomes positively frightening in a tropical thunderstorm. I well remember one night being awakened and finding myself drenched by the water pouring in through the porthole, and I gained the impression we were being swamped. Luckily, a few minutes later we got to the leeward of an island, where we sheltered for the night. At the time I was thus awakened, I found something trying to get under the bedclothes, and discovered it to be a big Red Colobus monkey, which had been given me a few days before at Entebbe. I had been having tea with Sir Frederick Jackson, the Governor, and in the course of our conversation he mentioned that a man had just died who owned a Red Colobus, which his wife wanted to find a good home for. Directly the monkey saw me, we became great friends, and he stayed with me nearly to the end of the war. I have had three of this species at various times, and I place them before any other animal for keen eyesight. When I got back to camp near Kilimanjaro, he used to enjoy sitting with the sentry on a little roofed platform on poles some fifteen feet from the ground. There he squatted for hours, and could spot a movement in the bush long before the sentry had seen it. His method of indicating this was first to duck his head slightly, then take another look, and finally look up at you and at the same time grunt and look away again in the direction of the movement, thus telling you most definitely that he had seen something. The only aggravating habit he possessed was picking pockets, his great delight being to find a tobacco pouch, tear it into little bits, and then scatter the tobacco and pouch with his hands, fan-wise, all over the ground.

The lakes of Africa can best be likened to magical mirrors, for in their mysterious depths one finds true

reflections of Nature's beauty, the ever-changing skies over gently swaying foliage, and the pageant of her creatures, great and small, as they come down to drink.

Amongst the many interesting animals that haunt the shores of Lake Victoria is the elusive *situtunga*, which is related to the bush-buck, though larger, and possessing very long hooves and shaggy hair, like a water-buck. This curious animal is purely a beast of the marshes, making its home in the thick reed beds, where the water is deep. It is very shy, and only a few have been shot, because its long hooves enable it to travel over the most treacherous swamps, into which even a lightly built man would disappear in a few minutes if he attempted to follow. It swims well and often makes its home among the papyrus. If there is any danger about, it remains hidden throughout the day, venturing out only at night, but in places where it is not likely to be disturbed, it can be seen feeding by day. In contrast is the heavy buffalo, which, I was surprised to find, takes readily to the water, for I learnt in one place that the buffaloes swam out four miles to an island, a long way for such a large animal to swim. Apparently, on the island, they found a good feeding ground and peace, though, of course, the buffalo can easily defend itself when occasion arises. However, even the toughest warriors like a little peace and quiet sometimes.

Sitting beside the Falls, one sees quite a number of fish jumping, and then falling back into the boiling water again, where it tumbles over rocks, and where several cormorants stand in small groups ready to dive in and make a catch. At these Falls there used to be a couple of tame hippo, but, alas, they were shot to help create a hunting scene for an American film. It seems almost unbelievable that anyone should lend himself to such a murderous action, but I happen to know the

story was true; and I told it to Sir Percival Phillips of the *Daily Mail* at the Ibis Hotel, to which he came one afternoon with C. J. Ketchum of the *Daily Express*. I had not seen Sir Percival since we parted in Antwerp when it fell into the hands of the Germans. Both these men were very keen to do some fishing, and so after tea I took them down below the Falls, and anticipating a big bag, they had employed a boy from the hotel to carry it. We had only been there a little while when I noticed the sky behind the hill assuming a look of black anger—the clouds rolling round and round threateningly, and then a gust of wind shook the trees on the opposite bank. I asked if they wanted a wetting, saying, "We had better hurry back, for a tropical storm will be upon us in about ten minutes." They merely laughed, but, a few minutes later, Sir Percival decided to take my advice, and together we hurried back to the hotel. The first drop came splashing down just as we reached the verandah, and then the storm broke with thunderous intensity, the rain pouring down viciously. It had all happened so suddenly that Sir Percival looked at me and said, "It's almost unbelievable!" Then he laughed, pointing to the direction of the Falls, "Look what's coming!" There, struggling along through the deluge, was Ketchum, followed by the native boy, both looking as if they had just been dragged out of the lake!

Close to the hotel there used to be an old ramshackle ferry, worked by an oil engine, which took passengers across the end of the lake above the Falls to the Kampala road, but now a fine bridge has been built, about a quarter of a mile below the Falls, which carries the wonderful railway right into Uganda. The bridge also accommodates vehicular traffic of every type, which is a great advance on the old ferry.

As we passed over the bridge on our way to Kampala,

about fifty miles distant, we obtained a fine view of the Falls, the Lake and the Nile. What a pleasure it was to travel over a first-class road ! It gave one such a chance to admire the lovely tropical scenery with its swaying palms and dense jungles.

On arriving at Kampala, I noticed many changes and signs of progress. For instance, on my first visit in 1913 I stayed at an hotel which had primitive bedrooms all on ground-level, with mud floors and no glass in the windows ! In fact, there were no proper windows, only holes, about a foot square, high up over the doors. There were also no sheets to the beds. By contrast, on this visit I found on the same site the finest and most up-to-date hotel in Africa. And, by the way, there was also another great difference—the prices charged !

I remember that, on my first visit, after sleeping a couple of nights in what can best be described as a cell, I pitched my tent in the grounds of the old fort. The Kabaka, or “ King ”, as we call him in England, was, at that time, a young man, with an English tutor. He visited me several times, and I found he was interested in photography; and when I lunched with him one day, he showed me his miniature cine-projector, and casually asked me if I would be so kind as to join up some broken film for him. Of course I agreed, and on the next day two natives came along with the biggest basket I had ever seen, and inside I found hundreds of feet of miniature film, all mixed up and broken every fifteen or twenty feet ! I gasped, for the film would have taken a week to repair. Next day he came along, and I gently explained what a long job it would be for me, but, I said, I would show him how to do it, and I left him some joining cement. This pleased him, and then he kindly arranged an entertainment of native sports—wrestling, dancing and a sham fight. Uganda is noted for its drums, which are of every

possible size, ranging from tiny ones to enormous ones; and they were all in evidence that day, together with stringed instruments, which helped to make a fine orchestra.

A most curious incident occurred during the sham fight in which the painted warriors used long reeds in place of spears. It was quite unexpected, and yet it made me think, and, for a moment, gave a semblance of reality. The black man is a good actor, and all the players in this war drama entered into it with great zest. I am sure no white actor ever played the rôle of a gladiator, or "died" more dramatically or realistically, than did one vanquished fighter on the outskirts of the mock engagement. He rose on his elbows, half struggled to his knees, fell back, gasped, and then lay motionless, face upwards in the broiling sun, while the battle went on. Then, out of the sky dropped a big vulture with dramatic suddenness, and hovered over him. The "dead" man quickly rose, beating it off with his reed. At first we all gasped, amazed that a mock battle should include so realistic an incident, and then the silence was broken by bursts of laughter, as the man sprang to life. Vultures, like eagles, live to a good age, and have been known to exist for half a century. Perhaps, in the not very distant past, this same bird had shot down from the blue on the edge of some real battlefield !

It was in 1930 that, having run short of film and being obliged to await a further consignment from home, I took the opportunity of visiting M'barara—about 180 miles southwards, and ninety miles from Lake Kivu and the Gorilla Sanctuary. I found it a small post consisting of a few bungalows and small stores, one of the latter being kept by an old war companion of mine. He lived alone, save for the companionship of a chimpanzee named Josephine. She was slightly built, and rather a

fragile little creature, but very affectionate; and one of the most pathetic sights I think I have ever looked upon was Josephine playing with a little native girl about four years old, whose parents were dead and who roamed about the locality scantily clad with a bit of old shirt wrapped round her middle, and fed by anyone who took pity upon her. She was a subdued child, always shrinking away from humans, but when she was with Josephine, her whole demeanour changed, as if she had found a kindred soul. They would play for hours with large yellow berries about the size of a pigeon's egg, picked from wild bushes close by. Sitting about a yard apart, they would roll these berries backwards and forwards, uttering shrieks of joy over the simple game. Whenever I gave Josephine a banana, she would toddle over to the little girl, break it in two, and offer half to her. It was a miracle the little child had not been devoured by leopards, which often tried to get at the chimpanzee in its sleeping box on the verandah. Indeed, so determined were the leopards that finally my friend had to take the chimpanzee indoors each night, and frequently the little girl crept into the room as well. I visualised the two orphans cuddled up asleep on a blanket in the corner of the room, whilst the sinister sound of a leopard's "pad-pad" on the verandah spelt tragedy for anyone who ventured out.

Last year, as I was going along to see an old "acquaintance", the sacred crocodile "Lutembe" on the shores of Lake Victoria, I saw, in the distance, the Kabaka driving in a beautiful car. By a coincidence, he too had just been down to see the old crocodile. I hardly recognised him, for he was now a middle-aged man and well filled out, and, it must be remembered, the native of forty-five looks as old as a white man of fifty-five or sixty.

The strange thing, however, is that one seldom sees an

old man—a fact explained to me once as being due, in places like Central Africa, to a custom by which, when a native falls sick, he is isolated in some place outside the village, being given plenty of food, but very often he is devoured by wild animals.

As we neared the shores of the lake, our attention was held by the fascinating variety of bird life, including the handsome white-headed fish eagles, often to be seen, singly or in twos, perched on a branch. They throw back their heads so far that they almost touch their bodies, and emit a curious noise, which, in the distance, might easily be mistaken for a laugh. However, the most interesting sight of all is the Sacred Crocodile, which, rumour declares, took part in many hideous and gruesome orgies in days gone by. I have referred to Lutembe in the chapter on "Jungle Sounds", but I am writing now for the benefit of any who may wish to see this extraordinary monster, if they have the good luck to visit Uganda.

Imagine how strange a sight is presented by a native standing on a rock calling "Lutembe! Lutembe!" What is stranger still is that, five or ten minutes later, one sees a black speck appearing round the corner, slowly floating towards the shore, and, on drawing nearer, resembling a log of wood. Silently it approaches, and directly it touches the shore, the ungainly, evil-looking monster waddles for a few yards on to the land, and then flops down, as if exhausted by the effort. And, believe it or not, it actually sheds crocodile tears as it lies there. But just throw it a fish, and it forgets its grief in an instant, and, with one mighty snap as it turns its head sideways, it has the fish in its mouth and swallows it rapidly. Another interesting fact is that if it does not hear its name called, possibly because the wind is in the wrong direction, the native smacks the water with a flat piece of board, and this quickly brings it on the scene, for, as I

have already said, the vibrations on the water apparently carry farther than the human voice on such occasions.

I have been interested in this old crocodile for many years, and so, naturally, when I was at the lake last February I paid it a visit; but though the native called for some time, it did not put in an appearance. However, whilst I was waiting, I noticed a car and three Indians beside it, on the edge of a forty-foot-high rock overlooking the lake, about a hundred yards away, and as I approached it, two of the men left. When I drew nearer, a native boy showed me a dying hornbill in beautiful plumage. It was barely alive, and, on examining it, I found a small puncture in its neck, near the head. Feeling suspicious, I walked up to the car, and inside it I saw the wings of several beautifully coloured birds. I asked the remaining Indian who had shot them, but he denied all knowledge of the affair. But, a little later, I caught the other two Indians in possession of a powerful air-gun, and after extracting a confession from them that they had shot the birds, I took the weapon away. They were employed by the Government in the Treasury Department, and when I told them the birds were protected, their excuse was that they had only been in the country three months, and did not know the law. Incidentally, the air-gun is a curse, and I should welcome a stricter law applied to it, both abroad and in my own country, for in the hands of thoughtless or unscrupulous people it becomes a menace to harmless creatures.

Continuing my journey to Entebbe, which is about twelve miles farther along, we passed through forests of great beauty, a beauty enhanced by the fact that the lake was visible all the time. From the day I first landed in Uganda, I have always regarded Entebbe, with its delightful outlook on the lake, as one of the

prettiest towns in Central Africa. A clean freshness pervades it, and everything presents an immaculate appearance. Invitingly cool bungalows are set in a land of flowers in endless beds, bushes loaded with blooms, trees and vines of every hue. The eye is greeted with masses of yellow, purple, blue, fiery crimson, and lilac. The Governor of Uganda and many English people, mostly officials, live in Entebbe, which includes amongst its amenities a good golf course, tennis courts and an attractive Club house.

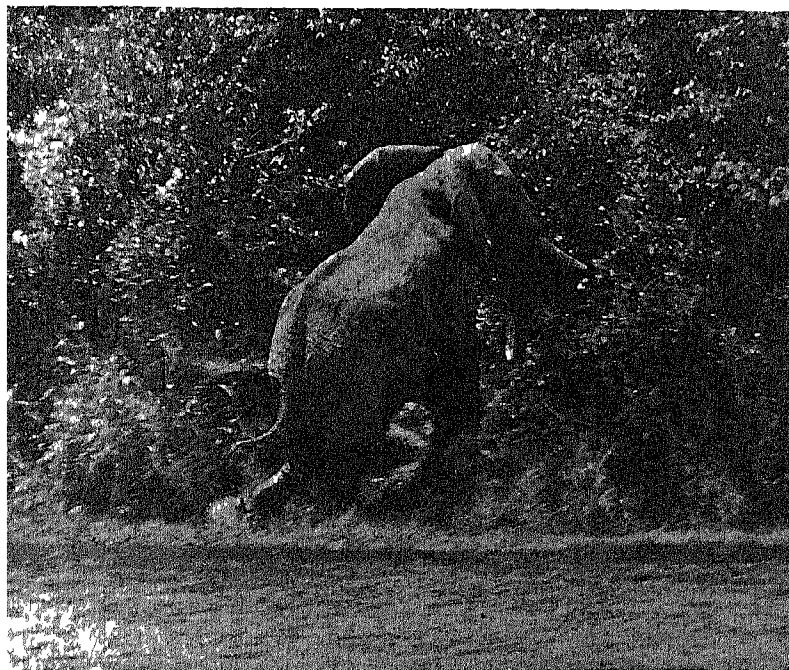
Close to the shore is the old Government House, which is now serving as an hotel, and nearby I saw about a dozen of the long-horned Angolia cattle feeding peacefully, as they wandered along, whilst a number of white cow-herons accompanied them, some walking by their sides, others almost under their feet. Often the birds would rush forward as a grasshopper, or some other insect, showed itself when disturbed by the cattle. Close by them were a couple of Kavirondo cranes. What a colourful picture it made with the lake, trees, clouds, animals and birds all combining to create a glimpse of Nature at her best! I was full of regret at being unable to film the scene in natural colour, for it would have been a joy for any photographer to catch so perfect a picture as this for the cinema screen.

Whilst I must admit that close-ups and sunsets in colour have been excellently produced, I am of opinion that distant colour shots are a comparative failure, since they are lacking in definition and, as a result, they make one's eyes ache in looking at them. This is possibly due to one's unconscious effort to focus the blurred scene sharply—an impossible task which creates considerable eye-strain.

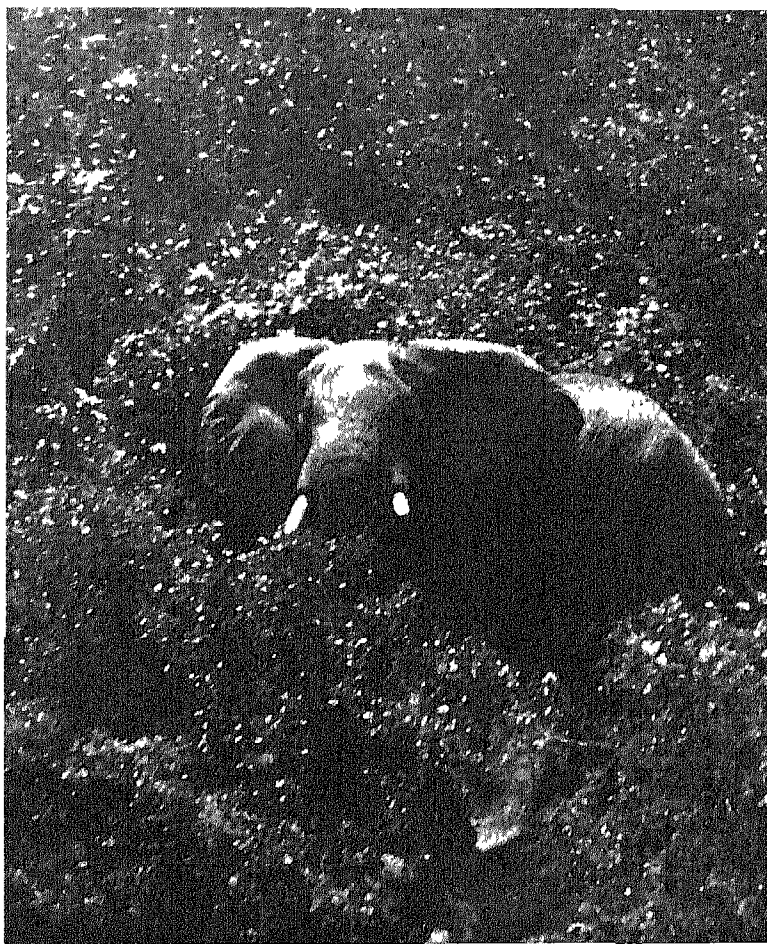
Every time I have visited the town I have been accorded a warm welcome not only by the Governor and several acquaintances, but by my old friend Captain



ELEPHANTS ENJOY BATHING JUST AS MUCH AS HUMANS



THE SLOW THUD OF OUR ENGINES DISTURBED THIS BATHER



STUDYING OUR CRAFT FROM THE SECURITY OF THE JUNGLE

Pitman, the Game Warden, a most delightful and informative official, whom I have known for many years, and have always admired for his administrative work. Both he and his wife are extremely generous in their hospitality, and do everything possible to help the advancement of one's work. Before leaving Entebbe, Captain Pitman took me along to the Research Offices and grounds, where scientists labour day and night to conquer the difficult and often mysterious diseases that occur in a tropical country. It was there I saw some crocodile's eggs that were just hatching out, and I was amazed to see that only a few minutes after they left their shells the little beggars could move about. This research work greatly impressed me, for it provided yet another example of how man is for ever seeking to improve the lot of his fellows. Just as scientists and doctors experiment and toil in the great cities of the world, so in this remote part of Africa one finds parallel research going on to combat the dreaded diseases of the tropics. It is impossible to over-estimate the importance attached to the advance of medical science in these parts, for the progress of mankind in undeveloped regions can be greatly retarded, if not completely ruined, by illness, whereas by the conquering of malaria, tropical fevers, sleeping sickness, and so on, things are made easier for those who seek to blaze the trail.

Entebbe, then, remains for me a vivid memory of natural fresh beauty on the one hand, and selfless research on the other, both combining to symbolise the Africa of to-day. The miraculous advances in every vital walk of life in the great continent—housing, transport, and health—remind me of Pope's lines:

“ And still to-morrow's wiser than to-day,
We think our fathers fools, so wise we grow;
Our wiser sons, no doubt, will think us so.”

CHAPTER XV

FROM KAMPALA TO THE MURCHISON FALLS

"Nature is the only book that presents words of deep significance on all its pages."—GOETHE.

AS we left Kampala on our way to Lake Albert, I remember remarking that every native in the place seemed to possess a bicycle, for it was early morning, and the streets were simply covered with them. However, after we emerged from the town and had been travelling for half an hour, passing bullock waggons and natives carrying bales of cotton or rolls of hides on their heads, we suddenly encountered a totally different scene, for by the side of the road a small crowd of natives was just dispersing, and as I drew alongside, I saw what had once been a smart touring car, but was now just a crumpled mass. I found out it had been speeding and come to grief with a heavy lorry. It was quite the most hopeless smash I had ever seen, the car having so concertinaed in that from front to back it measured hardly more than four feet. I never imagined a chassis could be so utterly crushed, and I was not surprised to learn that all the occupants had been killed instantly. I said to my native driver, "Now you see why the Bwana always likes to go slowly, and to-day you must be very, very careful." I made this remark because it happened to be the first day for the delivery of cotton to the ginneries, and every laden lorry would be in competition with the next to get its load in first. I was looking at the smashed car as I spoke, and little dreamt I should be forcibly reminded of my words before twenty minutes had passed.

Well, we resumed our journey, and I was studying the scenery and the many interesting birds around us when suddenly we came to a sharp corner, and I was horrified to see a big lorry heading straight for us. At the same moment I realised we were on the wrong side of the road, *and so was the lorry!* Both drivers saw the danger at once, swerved to their own sides, and then there was a screeching of brakes, followed by the sound of tearing metal. We were all thrown on to our faces with a shocking jolt, but luckily the car did not turn over, otherwise we should have gone down the side of the hill. On alighting, I found our wing had been nearly torn off. Both drivers now faced each other, trembling from shock and fright, but this did not affect their tongues, for they started to shout and wave their arms about at each other. After I had separated them and severely reprimanded the lorry driver, I sent him on his way, and approached my own driver, and only then did I notice he showed evidence of suffering from a hang-over. Frowning at him, I said, "You've been drinking!" "Yes, Bwana," he admitted. "How dare you when you have to drive a car and are responsible for other people's lives?" "Well, Bwana, I met a friend last night, and I had one drink, and then I was happy, and after two drinks I was very happy, and then, Bwana, I had three drinks, and I was so happy I slept and slept, and to-day my head is not so good!" "You are a very bad boy, and I ought to punish you." "But, Bwana, you ask me if I drink, and I say 'Yes.' Bwana, I never tell a lie!" And that ended our dialogue, for he apparently thought truth completely excused his intoxication.

As midday approaches, I can think of nothing pleasanter than to spend a couple of hours for luncheon at some carefully selected spot *en route*, where one may rest in the shade and enjoy the fascinating activities of bird life—

the weaver birds, for instance, busily building and making a lot of noise in a tree they have made their own, for they are community dwellers. Many of the nests are bright green, showing that they are newly made from long strands of fresh grass, which in a short time will turn brown in the heat of the sun. To see these bright yellow and black little birds hanging to their nests and fluttering their wings is a delightful sight.

The country through which we were travelling consisted of low hills and swampy valleys, with a good deal of elephant grass, the blades of which rose to over fifteen feet. On the higher ground, in the groves amongst the trees, were several species of monkeys, some chasing each other along the branches and others chattering as if annoyed at being disturbed. Naturally I made frequent stops to study all the different species of birds that are a feature of this part of the country, although there is also bigger game to be seen, Uganda being an elephant country.

These great animals sometimes raid the native plantations, not only causing a great deal of damage, but often, when interfered with, killing the natives, so that my friend Captain Pitman has to go along and chastise the intruders, which is no easy task. Also, as you may know, elephants never forget. There was a water-hole in Northern Kenya where elephant used to come during the day to drink—I am writing now of thirty years ago; a man who called himself a hunter shot one of them, and since then they have *never visited* that water-hole in daylight.

On the journey I saw yellow and green parrots, beautiful sunbirds, bee-eaters, small jays, and also magpies, big hornbills, eagles, kites, hawks and kingfishers, and also countless gorgeous butterflies. There is too a great variety of trees, many of them beautiful

against the sky—date-palms, with fronds creating a graceful pattern, huge candelabra, euphorbias, and also (a never-to-be-forgotten sight) the red-flowering tree, the blossoms of which cover the branches before the leaves appear. Here indeed were trees of magnificence, standing in such solitary state that one felt their glory was being wasted unless someone was looking at them.

At one spot I saw scores of cranes ahead of me, wheeling round and round in the sky exactly like vultures over a kill, which I thought strange until, turning a corner of the hillside, we had to descend and cross a swamp, with elephant grass on either side of the road. Flying down the swamp were millions of locusts. Luckily, they were crossing the road, and not coming at us, or I am afraid the car would have been stopped by the seemingly never-ending swarm flying over the elephant grass. Happily, they just missed the car, though some of them did catch us like a shower of hail-stones banging on the side of the vehicle—the noise being so great that we could hardly hear ourselves speak. At one time when the air was black with them it became so dark that we almost had to stop, as I was afraid we might drive off the narrow road and down into the swamp. However, after travelling about three-quarters of a mile, we were clear of them, and got on to higher ground, where we stopped to look back on the scene. The storks, we noticed, had gorged themselves on locusts, and in fact were still busy. Farther along, I was told by two frantic natives that their plantations would be invaded, and that sometimes, as the hordes of locusts came on, hundreds of storks would appear from nowhere; and I thought to myself it would be a good thing if they could come in their thousands instead of hundreds, for the locust spells disaster for settler and native alike.

After crossing the small Kafu River, which flowed

slowly through beds of plumed papyrus, we were soon in the native Kingdom of Unyoro, which, though it is part of our Protectorate, is separate from the Kingdom of Uganda. We were making for Butiaba, but the driver took the wrong turning, and instead of going into Hoima, we passed it and finally arrived at Masindi, a quiet little township. As there was no one about, I went along until I came upon an Indian petrol pump; and I had been there only a minute or two when an English policeman walked up to me and said, "I have been informed that you exceeded the speed-limit just as you entered the town." At first I was amazed and thought he was joking, as I had not seen any notice or even a soul until I neared the garage, and I said so. He was most serious about the matter, however, and wanted to know where I had come from and where I was going, telling me there was a large notice limiting the speed to twenty miles per hour which I ought to have observed, and then he informed me of the hundreds of miles of roads he had to control. When I told him of the several accidents I had seen due to speeding, he left me, remarking, "Well, we can't be everywhere at the same time, can we?"

I became interested in the place during the short time I was there, and found that it was a clean little town of neat bungalows, and that it was the headquarters of the Northern Province, and actually boasted a golf course. I thought then of the golfers' troubles in Africa, how at Nyeri the rhino trot across the course, how at Jinja the hippo visit the course at night, and how at Masindi the black and white crows wait and watch until the player has driven off and then, with a quick swoop, dive on the balls, seize them, and fly off into the nearby trees. Also at Masindi I saw a good many forktailed kites, which are great scavengers, and quite fearless as

they swoop down to pick up some morsel. There were also several black and white crows and vultures flying round, and amongst them all a couple of wagtails running backwards and forwards, quite unconcerned.

So much has been said and written about the game of Kenya that Uganda has been neglected, most of the travellers I have met having no idea of the diversity of its fauna. Consequently, I am sure it will interest the naturalist if I list them as follows: elephant, rhino, buffalo, kudu, eland, roan antelope, oryx, water-buck, topi, hartebeeste, kob, zebra, situtunga, impala, reedbuck, klipsringer, dik-dik, bush-buck, oribi, duiker, lion, leopard, cheetah, and many more. Uganda is a country of beautiful lakes, giant forests, plains, bush and swamp, through which I have travelled in all directions, and as a lover of Nature it gave me great pleasure to note that the authorities have now made Game Reserves there. The lakes provide a remarkable variety of fish as well as of water-fowl, and to all keen on fishing are a great attraction, as the giant Nile perch runs up to and over 200 lbs. in weight. Then, in contrast, there are such districts as the mountain forest homes of the gorilla, and in other parts of the great forests are countless chimpanzees and hundreds of monkeys. In addition, there are such rare animals as the white rhino, whose counterpart I have often studied in Zululand, over 1,500 miles distant. Of course, the real big game of Uganda are elephant and buffalo, and they are in such great numbers they have to be controlled. For instance, there are thousands of elephants in the great Budongo Forest alone, and it is no uncommon thing to find herds of them and of buffalo on the roadway at night.

Retracing our steps, we drove back into the little town of Hoima, pleasantly situated amongst hills on which are cultivated cotton, beans, yams, millet and plantains.

Without further incident we passed on through elephant grass and the forests of Budongo, a kingdom of palms, flowering trees, creepers and wild life of every description. Suddenly, on turning a corner, we came upon one of the unique sights Africa is for ever presenting without warning, for there, hundreds of feet below us, and a mile away, lay the little township and port of Butiaba, on Lake Albert, with its sandy beach and shimmering waters, and in the distance the dim hills of the Congo. After descending from the escarpment we commenced to cross the flats, which at some remote period must have been covered with water. By the side of the road ran a telegraph line, and I noticed there were hundreds of swallows gathered on the wires, preparing for their return journey to England and other Northern countries. This seemed extraordinary, for they were in a place with unlimited food, and yet they were possessed with that strange urge to travel and brave the dangers of starvation and cold *en route*. I stopped and photographed them, and recalled how I had seen them arrive in South Africa in December; and I came to the conclusion that the swallow ringed in England, which is recorded to have done the trip from there to the Cape in three weeks, must have been exceptional, for I have observed over a number of years that as a rule they take almost six weeks, which does not leave them a great deal of time in Africa.

Upon arrival at the lake-side, it seemed strange to see steamers lying there so far away from the sea, for I remembered how, to reach this spot, they had had to come many hundreds of miles inland—indeed a great achievement. There was one fine boat named after my friend, "Robert Coryndon", a man who had quickly won the hearts of the people in the all too short time he was in Central Africa, when his untimely death closed

his good work both in Kenya and South Africa. The Superintendent of the Marine Service, who had been advised from Nairobi, had a small steamer ready for us, appropriately named the "Livingstone", with a crew of a dozen and wood for fuel piled high on the deck, which was to take us to the Murchison Falls, where the Nile runs down for thirty miles into Lake Albert and, within a short distance, turns and starts out again on its way to the Sudan and Egypt. Within a few minutes we were on board, and had started on a journey full of unusual beauty and climatic contrast. As I love the water, it was a pleasant change to be sitting in a comfortable chair beneath the awning of a roomy deck built up on the after-part of our little craft, with sleeping accommodation for four or five people just below. Though the lake was so calm and tranquil, the clouds mirrored in the glassy surface, it can, at times, be extremely rough and dangerous, when a sudden gale blows up from the Congo mountains on the opposite shore. Fortunately, there are many little bays which offer refuge at such times. The light on the water began to fade as the rich glowing sunset gave way to dark clouds, which were gathering over the Congo mountains in a most sinister way. The scene conjured up memories of my past travels through its dark and mysterious forests, of my encounters with its sudden storms, dangerous animals, pigmies and cannibals, and also of the proximity of sleeping sickness. Thus I mused over the past, and felt surprised and thankful I had escaped death in all its forms on those expeditions.

We did not reach the mouth of the river until darkness had fallen, and so our little Fundi skipper said we would anchor a short distance away. The night was very dark and a weird silence brooded over everything. I had expected to hear hippo, but there was no sound of any kind. Then, suddenly, a light appeared in the blackness,

in what I judged to be the papyrus, and the voice of a native was heard. A few words were passed with our skipper, the light disappeared just as suddenly, and all was silent again. By the way, there were no lights on the boat, which I thought was very wise, as we were not anxious to attract mosquitoes. Feeling wide awake, I sat on the deck smoking, reflecting, and feeling completely at peace with the world, and during this period the darkness lifted and stars appeared, and as if by some magical command, the place sprang to life for a few moments. First, there was a loud smack as a big Nile perch jumped out of the water close by me, followed by another not far away, and then a hippo started grunting. Insect life joined in, and just as I was getting used to the noises, all became silent again! As the night grew clearer, I could just make out the faint outline of the Congo mountains, and gazing into this dim distance, I was surrounded by a world of memories and I began to travel through the years. I saw myself, a long, long time ago, within a few miles of the other end of the lake, camped under the Mountains of the Moon, and waiting patiently for days on end to secure a picture of their snow-capped summits, and then, growing impatient, foot-slogging it southwards as far as Lake Edward, and then returning again to camp, for another ten days under the Mountains, on the edge of a beautiful crater lake with wonderful tropical surroundings which made it almost impossible to believe that hidden in the mist high above there was nothing but snow.

This crater lake was one of those dazzling gems which Nature places with such a touch of genius in exactly the right setting to display its beauty. It was a little sheet of blue-crystal light, lying in the depths of what must have once been an old volcanic crater. The first glance of it is entrancing, especially after travelling through

broken hilly country, all burnt and parched through lack of rain, for, from the top of a small hill, one gazes down and sees the blue sparkle of the water surrounded by a fringe of forest trees and palms, a perfect sanctuary for bird, beast and man. How restful to the eye to look at the deep shadows and the changing hues of the cool water !

One evening, I was sitting about fifty yards away from the camp, looking down into the beautiful lake, and observing the wonderful bird-life on and around it, when I happened to look up and felt for a moment I was being confronted by some mystic apparition, for there, as if suspended in the sky, was the snow-capped mountain, silent and motionless, unearthly, and beyond human understanding. This was the eerie yet majestic effect created by the fact that the mist had hidden and seemingly divided the summit from its tropical base and the foliage surrounding me. For several seconds I was hypnotised by the scene, and then I awoke to the fact that precious time was flying and I was missing the chance of a picture. I dashed to my tent, which took but a minute, to obtain my cine camera, and then I worked frantically to get it ready, which only took two more minutes, and then, just as I was ready to turn the handle, the last of the snow-capped top disappeared ! I almost wept, for I had seen, in that fleeting space of time, the upper part of nearly thirty miles of gleaming ice and snow, only to find, a moment later, that clouds had suddenly closed down, preventing me from capturing a film record of the scenic miracle; and now no one could have known or believed there was a mountain within a thousand miles. It was thus that Stanley had first seen the far-famed, mysterious Mountains of the Moon, which so many travellers had passed by, unconscious of their presence. This explained why the great Mountain had for so many years lain

hidden in its everlasting mists, without being discovered. The best chances to see this wondrous spectacle are in the months of February and July, when the weather is really dry, for during the other months it is either raining, beginning to do so, or recovering from wet weather.

Time was against me, as I had to move on, and so, somewhat disheartened, I packed up the next morning, to return to Fort Portal, and then resumed my long and arduous journey on Stanley's trail to the West Coast. Nevertheless, as I had practically to walk in a half-circle round the Mountain, on my way to the Congo, I still had hopes of securing my film of it. After crossing the north-eastern slopes of the Mountain, I descended into the low-lying plains of the Semliki, and in a day's march I dropped 2,500 feet. This valley is overflowed during the rains, and at the best of times is hardly more than marsh land, whilst years ago it must have been the bottom of a lake. The acrid soil grows a rough and not very succulent grass, and there are a few scattered specimens of euphorbia and acacia, whilst occasionally a sickly-looking palm lifts up its lonely head. The slopes of the Mountain behind me were concealed by a low-lying mist, and it was around here I saw a fine species of kob, an antelope with golden hair and beautiful curving horns. Evidence of the black buffalo was also present, but once across the Semliki, I found only the smaller brown and red species. I crossed the river at the old ferry on the Irumu highway, the canoes in use being very old, consisting of aged and decaying logs through the sides of which it seemed possible to poke a finger. This river connects Lake Albert with Lake Edward Nyanza, and is a swift muddy stream which pursues its snake-like course for many miles close to the foothills of Rewenzori.

Its steep, muddy banks are constantly being washed away, and it teems with some of the largest crocodiles in

Africa. A camp was made on the Belgian side, as I wanted to photograph some of these famous monsters, and about a quarter of a mile below the crossing I found a sand-pit where they frequently congregated. I therefore erected a grass screen, and hid behind it with my camera. Nor had I long to wait, for very soon there were crested cranes, a heron, and sandpipers running along the edge of the sand-bank, while thirty yards below this, in the thick muddy water, I saw three or four crocodiles that looked just like logs of wood floating near the bank; suddenly the first Saurian appeared—a big fellow about eighteen feet long, and, after walking a couple of yards on the sand-bank, he flopped down and rested, at the same time opening his jaws as if yawning, except that when they were fully open, he kept them so. Then the birds began to strut all round him, especially the smaller ones, but, although they hovered near his jaws, I never saw them take any insects from his mouth. Then another crocodile appeared, three or four feet longer, followed by a third even bigger. I was highly pleased with my position, especially when the assembly was further enlarged by the appearance of the grandfather of all the crocodiles, which by its giant proportions made those already basking there look like mere monitors! He seemed to heave himself up from the water, waddling on all fours, with at least two feet between his immense bulk and the sand, and after travelling several yards, he also flopped down. He was like some antediluvian monster of the reptilian epoch, and judged by comparison with surrounding objects, he seemed to be almost thirty feet long; and I regretted I could not measure him. However, I made a film record of him, and knew I could obtain his exact length later on, when he had left the sand-bank and I had taken the distance between him and the camera. After seeing the huge brute, I had no difficulty in

believing the story of how a drinking rhinoceros had been caught and dragged beneath the surface by a crocodile; and, needless to say; I kept a sharp look-out whilst doing that measuring of the distance from his position to the camera !

A couple of miles from the crossing, and not far from the river, I came to the edge of a forest which was still smouldering after a grass fire which had swept up to it, and although the ground was covered with a thick carpet of feathery grey-blue ash, and light columns of smoke were still rising in some places, I saw, to my surprise, great round footprints, proving a herd of elephant had crossed there that morning. I had been anxious to get some studies of them as they went down to the river to drink, which resulted in several unexpected experiences, one, in particular, with some biting ants which proved in the end to be more aggressive and dangerous than the whole herd of elephant.

I was very glad to move out of this unhealthy district, for the natives all around seemed to be fever-stricken and badly nourished, and, besides, sleeping sickness was prevalent. I felt sorry for those natives, because they had to contend with soil of very poor quality, and then, when anything did grow out of it, the elephant took the most of it. I remembered noting they exchanged muddy, coarse-tasting fish with the hill people for the nutritious endesis. On the way to Irumu, it was hard going both up hill and down, and there was no penetration into forest, as I had expected; that was to come later.

At last we reached Boga, which was once an important Belgian post and the frontier Custom House, but all I found was a sick medical officer, and a British ivory elephant hunter, whom I had met in Nairobi some years previously. This poor fellow met his death soon after I left him. It was at Boga I had a sharp attack of fever,

and whilst lying on my bed I was never alone, for a pair of pied wagtails ran about the camp and close to me; and, strange to say, whenever I camped after that, right up to the time I took to canoe travelling on the Aruwemi River, a pair of pied wagtails was always there.

The country I next passed through was very difficult going, and my guide landed me at the wrong village, in a poverty-stricken valley where it was immediately evident the people had been drinking "malwa", a fermented concoction of bananas and grain. To become dependent on the Congo native is to invite trouble. One of the major difficulties was with the porters, many of whom fell sick, and when I encountered the Bahima tribe and asked for help, they refused to carry any loads, and looked at my human beasts of burden with contempt, the women scowling and the children disdaining any friendly advances.

Such setbacks are to be expected on these journeys, but I soon realised I was entering the Congo because of the facial disfigurements of various types in which its natives indulge, and to which, incidentally, one soon grows accustomed. For instance, the Bahima woman, in an effort to improve on Nature, indulges in a novel form of ornamentation; her upper lip is pierced to hold a number of small wooden plugs, whilst another skewer-like bit of wood is run through her nostrils—a form of "make-up" guaranteed to ruin the most beautiful face in the world.

I next passed through seemingly impenetrable forest, although it is not until the Ituri River is reached that one realises the meaning of dense growth, and the vast dimensions of Africa's forests. In this connection, it is a most curious thing that the African native will never lift, or throw aside, any obstacle that may be in his path, preferring instead to walk round it. Consequently,

there are countless well-trodden paths, wandering aimlessly, which compel him, in a day's march, to add hundreds of unnecessary yards to his journey. When I asked about these winding paths in open country, I was informed that they were accounted for by the fact that on the old slave-routes many died, and as they were not buried, the paths were changed to avoid the dead bodies.

I had some more trouble with the porters a few hours from Irumu, when I halted at a populous village, but as I kept calm and pretended not to understand what it was all about, they resumed work, and soon after that a fierce thunder-storm caught us. Ultimately we arrived at Irumu, wet through and very tired, having covered over eighteen miles. This town was a most important Government post, with a custom house, a court, a prison and about two hundred black troops under the command of a Belgian officer. There were about fourteen Government officials, and, if I remember correctly, two Germans, three Frenchmen, two Danes, two Hollanders, a Norwegian, and a Swede, and also a man who proved most influential in the matter of securing porters, who was a Boer from South Africa.

I travelled on, and on nearing the end of the open country and reaching the top of a hill, I had a view that was worth coming many miles to see. To the West, at the foot of a slightly undulating slope, and only a few miles away, there rose the green wall or rampart of the great forest, the line of demarcation being perfectly clear. For more than 800 miles it stretched away to the westward, like a dark green sea. To the North and to the South as well as to the West, it dominated the scene and held the eye. To the East, billowing far away for miles and miles, swept the grey-green ocean of the open country. But it is the forest always that exerts the

greater influence—that blue vastness westward where people and animals knew no sunlight, whereas eastward they can find no shade. Thus the peoples in these separate worlds, differing in customs and modes of living, are born, and die, unknown to one another. I was staring over a land where the air was clear for miles, a land where white men had never gone; and yet, beyond the foliage of that mighty forest prison there flowed a great river, pouring its huge volume into the Atlantic Ocean, though my viewpoint was barely half-way across the African continent.

Like a Titan's contour map stretched out in front of me, lay the homes of savage tribes, haunts of sorcery and witchcraft, cruelty, slavery and death. For centuries the forest has been thus dark and ominous, tempting one to enter and explore its mysteries. Within two hours of surveying it, I stood on its fringe, and then plunged down several hundred feet into heavy bush. My first sensation was the sudden change from the heat of the plain, and then a thousand strange odours filled my nostrils. Here was deep, almost black shade, damp earth, and the instinctive feeling that one was surrounded by queer creatures and plants that love darkness—things that spring up and die so quickly that their aromas when living and when decaying mingle. A few more steps took me into even deeper gloom, and looking back I found the last rays of sunshine had entirely disappeared. For an instant I was tempted to rush back again into daylight, but I crushed the idea, and went on. It was here, not so many years ago, that Stanley, travelling eastward in his expedition to the relief of Emin Pasha, had pushed aside the last gloomy veil of the forest and emerged upon a rolling plain.

There are two distinct worlds in these forests. The one is in the tree-tops, where it is bright, sunny and warm,

whence the voices of monkeys and chimpanzees often reached me, though I could not see them, and where lived eagles, hornbills, and a host of smaller, brightly coloured birds. The other world is in the dark tropical undergrowth, where dangers lurk in every shadow, and the inhabitants are insects, beetles, ants, scorpions, and many poisonous snakes. My path led towards the setting sun, and it was to be a long, long time before I saw the open spaces again. The trail was well defined, and sometimes I passed overgrown clearings where villages had once stood, and then I suddenly came on to the bank of a swift muddy stream, eight yards or so in width. On the farther bank a large canoe, hollowed out from a single log, was moored under the branches of an overhanging tree, and a call quickly brought out a couple of natives, who punted me across to the end of the Mongwana village of Kifiku, meaning, "the Place of Landing".

Here I found Pigmies, who offered to help me to secure pictures of the elusive okapi, the forest animal, half antelope and half giraffe, which not more than half-a-dozen white men had ever seen alive in the jungle. Day after day I crawled through little tunnels in the dense forests, but finally had to be content with seeing only the footprints of the animal. This reminds me of an incident, two or three years ago, when Dr. Vevers invited me to see their new acquisition at the London Zoo, a very fine okapi. I gazed at it for some time, and memories crowded on me of those terrible disease-ridden forests in which this animal lived its normal life, amidst sleeping sickness, fever, and all the horrors of a dungeon. I thought, too, of those tiny people who could squirm through the little tunnels in the undergrowth where I could not follow, and of the acute disappointment when, at the end of it all, I had only seen the animal's footprints,

and then lay for days on a bed of fever. Turning to Dr. Vevers, who must have guessed what I was thinking, I said: "To think of it! I have travelled thousands of miles, crawled about in the Congo forests, suffered hell, and now I have lived to see the day when, after all the money I have spent in trying to trace it in its natural surroundings, I now, like thousands of other people, can fulfil my ambition for the sum of one shilling. I hope the people appreciate the privilege of meeting this elusive creature face to face within a bus ride of their homes!"

Before I reached the Aruwimi River and took to canoe travelling, I, like Stanley, felt the depressing effects of living in this great forest. Through sleeping sickness, examples of which I saw in every direction, there were far fewer people than in 1888, when Stanley's dead and dying left their sickly bones along this very route. It is really impossible to describe adequately this vast area of 25,000 square miles, where life is stunted and long-suffering and death is a prolonged agony. It is an inhuman world beyond the full understanding of white men.

So vivid were these memories of my forest adventures that I was quite startled by the loud splash of another Nile perch, and upon returning to earth, or rather to the deck upon which I reclined, I decided to go below, and enjoy a comfortable sleep.

Dawn was just breaking as we moved off towards the entrance of the river, and I saw a couple of pelicans and some geese amongst the small islands of papyrus, whilst several cormorants passed us on the wing. As the boat leaves the lake and noses its way amongst small papyrus islands, it is difficult to believe this is the entrance to the Nile. Soon we were making our way through a narrow channel between dense banks of papyrus, whilst birds

of every description flitted around or moved mysteriously in the undergrowth. At first, not a word was spoken as our craft glided forward in this strange, silent world, and then there was a whisper from the skipper, "Hippo!", and we were soon level with it, but there was no movement, and then I saw it was dead. Each bend in the rapidly widening river brought us a new and ever-lovelier picture of reflected beauty, and when we finally left the papyrus behind, and the broadened river was leading us through bush, tree and open country, bigger animals appeared—the first being a herd of about thirty hippo, some walking on the banks, others half lying in the water or floating in the deeper parts. Two mothers had their babies on their backs, and as we drew closer, they heard the slight thud of our engines, although I had asked the skipper to slow down. When we were about 150 yards away from them, they sounded an alarm by uttering mighty grunts, and immediately those on the banks and in the shallow water dived into the river. There was a tremendous churning up of the water, as they all made for the deep parts, where they quickly submerged themselves. After a few seconds, several great snouts popped up, blowing spray, almost like whales, whilst others moved off, grunting incessantly. A few of the more curious ones came to within fifty yards of the boat, but most of them were travelling under the water, and apparently had lost their bearings, for occasionally a head would pop up a few feet away, and then, filled with surprise, its owner would almost jump out of the water, and then dive head first down again, wagging its little tail furiously as it disappeared. The river was simply alive with these hippo, every few miles bringing us to herds of hundreds.

As the journey progressed the ground from the low banks of the river began to change, sloping gradually

upwards and forming hillsides covered with bush and trees. Beauty increased as the river wound past rocky promontories which were reflected in the calm water, creating scenes of indescribable charm. Then we passed close to a tree filled with cormorants' nests, the adult birds being black, and the youngsters white, but so also were the trees, so that they were difficult to pick out. I also spotted many white-headed fish eagles sitting on the tops of bushes and in tree-tops, singly and in pairs—rather like gargoyles on a church tower.

Round the next bend we encountered bare banks with thin bush in the background, sloping up a hillside, and here were several kinds of game, including water-buck. Within a few yards of the water I photographed a mother with her youngsters, and as we drew nearer, she quickly moved away, and a moment later a big crocodile rose out of a hollow, barely fifteen yards from where he had been waiting for the two creatures. A hundred yards farther along stood a solitary tree, with an egret in its branches, and scores of weaver birds' nests hanging down, whilst beneath it there were at least a dozen crocodiles basking. In the distance, I saw a number of baboons, and also a small herd of buffalo; and as the boat approached, they moved beyond my camera range and disappeared.

Then I came across an elephant in the water, whilst, only a few yards away, in the background, stood a rhino listening. Both the great beasts then decided to retreat, for they, too, had heard the slow thudding engines coming nearer. This made me realise that my photographic work would have to be done coming down the river, when the engines could be stopped and the boat would glide silently with the stream; but this I learnt was dangerous on account of mud-banks, which our little skipper knew only too well. The next big thrill was

caused by elephant, mostly in herds of eighteen or twenty, some of which turned round to listen, spreading out their great ears and waving their trunks to and fro as they tried to locate possible danger. Others, sometimes alone, lumbered off into the bush.

At one part of the river, I decided we should anchor just where elephant and buffalo were known to come down to drink. I was glad we did stop, for I was very interested watching the antics of a couple of elephants that had made up their minds to come down to the water and cool themselves, for on several occasions I saw them almost submerged. It is a wonderful sight to see several elephants playing and wrestling in deep water, their actions reminding one of a happy seaside bathing scene. These two played hide-and-seek in a patch of bush fifty yards wide, and about twenty yards from the river. First one would walk cautiously out, stop suddenly, and look towards us, spreading out his big ears and raising his trunk in the air. Then he would turn round and disappear in the bush, only his back remaining visible, whilst the other, I could also see, imitated the first, though he came out on the opposite side of the bush. I knew they could neither see us nor capture our scent, but some instinct told them there was danger about, and as I sat watching them, I was reminded of some remarks made by Ernesti. It is fairly well-known that both the elephant and the rhino have eyes which are disproportionately small compared with their huge bodies, and on one occasion I asked Ernesti if he could explain this, and also why these giants relied upon their sense of smell. His explanation was typical of him, and extremely interesting. He said: "We know, Bwana, that the eyes of man are large for his body, for when men travel, they travel on the roads of the villages or the paths of the jungle. Now the road and the path are free from trees with thorns or

branches that might wound the eyes of man, so he travels without fear of being made blind. Man, therefore, allows his eyes to speak of all the things he wishes, and Nature has given him large eyes for that purpose. The rhino, Bwana, feeds on bushes which have many thorns, and the elephant, too, eats this food. Now the paths in the jungle and between the bushes allow men to pass by; but, Bwana, the rhino and elephant are very large, and if they, too, had large eyes like man, those eyes would soon be torn and wounded by thorns and branches when they moved along the paths of which I have spoken. Therefore, Bwana, Nature has been kind; for they have but small eyes, which are not easily wounded. Nature is also kind in another way, for she gave them large noses to collect the scent, and large bellows (lungs) to hold the scent. Then too, Bwana, the rhino and the elephant bite not, and claw not, like their enemies the lion and the leopard. They defend themselves by charging swiftly, for the heads of these giants are hard and strong. When a rhino or elephant charges, Bwana, his enemy may seek to hide beneath the bush which has many thorns; but the rhino and the elephant have no fear for the eyes they use but little. Their noses are large, the scent is strong, and their heads are like stone."

At last, after passing through this seemingly endless kingdom of animals and birds, we reached the Falls, or rather the place of anchorage about three-quarters of a mile below them, it being impossible for a boat to go nearer on account of a big whirlpool, and of rocks. From this spot in midstream we had an excellent view of the magnificent Falls in the distance, framed by the gorge several hundred feet high, with its steeply-rising banks, boulders, bushes, and trees of varying colour, whilst the Nile thundered down through a narrow gap in the rocks twenty feet wide, forming giant cascades,

eventually breaking into boiling foam hundreds of feet below. It seemed incredible that so big a river could come through such a narrow gap in the rock. My glasses enabled me to perceive, on the left of the whirlpool, huge crocodiles piled upon each other on the only available piece of clear bank, and so I jumped into our rowing-boat, and after a terrific struggle against the current, drew quite near to them. However, before I was within photographic range, a hippo which appeared to be acting as sentinel began to grunt, thus disclosing my presence, and immediately the crocodiles sprang to life, becoming one struggling, seething mass of viciousness, as they slithered and plunged into the water, transforming it into an inferno of evil—their cruel jaws popping up all over the place.

Hippo can be very dangerous to a small boat, and quite a number of people have lost their lives through being attacked either by a frightened or by a particularly vicious animal. I have heard of boats being upset, and of others being bitten almost in half by an infuriated hippo !

Suddenly, all was quiet again, and save for the heads of the crocodiles and hippos here and there, one could not imagine there was any danger about. I had tied the rowing-boat under some rocks, where it was hidden by overhanging bushes, and so I waited to see if they would crawl back on to the bank, but they were very artful, for every now and then an eye would appear just above the water, within ten yards of me. However, I was rewarded in another way, by seeing several species of beautiful kingfishers diving nearby, whilst many other gaily coloured birds I had never seen before began disporting themselves in the trees, rather like a mannequin parade. Then, about twenty yards away, amongst some bushes, a fight took place between a couple of

crocodiles, which had crept out on to the bank again, and the snapping of teeth, the lashing of tails, the grunting and the general commotion was terrific, until both, with a mighty splash, dashed into the water again. To watch these animals come on the land gives the impression that they are very slow-moving creatures. Indeed, I was under this impression until one day I saw a couple come out of the water apparently engaged in fight, and then chase across a rocky island at *lightning* speed. I was amazed at their pace, which was certainly as fast as I could run. This came as a great shock to me, making me realise how easily they could have caught me on several occasions, and also how easy it was for them to capture an animal when it came down to drink.

On returning to the "Livingstone", I was surprised to find it close to the shore, the anchor having apparently dragged in the current. Just before I retired to bed that night, there was a terrific bump caused by a hippo charging into the little steamer, presumably when swimming under water, but I don't suppose the impact even bruised him! About midnight, a lion roared in the distance, and a few minutes later there was a great commotion caused by a fight between lions and elephants, either an accidental encounter, or the lions had been trying to secure a young elephant. Whatever the reason, the wild trumpeting and screaming of the elephants mingling with the roaring of the lions—the latter making the significant, unpleasant, short coughing sound which indicated they were attacking—was not exactly soothing, and in the dead of the night it was guaranteed to upset the nerves of the heaviest of sleepers. In addition, hippo in the river had become excited by the battle, and were grunting all over the place, so that pandemonium reigned. Gradually, the noise abated, and ultimately silence descended again. I went ashore in the early

morning to see if there were any traces of the battle, but found nothing save a wide area where everything had been trampled upon and stamped down by the infuriated beasts.

From the boat's anchorage, there was a pathway along the side of the ravine to the Falls, and, on ascending it, I discovered plenty of spoor of elephant and buffalo which apparently used it daily, though how such heavy, ungainly creatures could travel over so narrow a path puzzled me, for the slightest slip would send one hurtling down right into the river. As we were not armed, the ship's boys lighted fires to frighten the animals away. The scenery was truly marvellous, and the Falls so fascinating, I could have spent days looking at them. They were discovered by Sir Samuel Baker in 1864, and named "Murchison", after the President of the Geographical Society, who had done so much to further exploration in Africa.

On returning to the boat, I saw a black colobus monkey high up in a tree on the rocks, performing the most astonishing gymnastic feats, and I discovered he was there each day for several hours, usually in the afternoons, and he appeared very interested in our boat. At last, I christened him the "Lone Colobus".

At the end of a week we were travelling slowly and almost silently down the river when I saw two huge elephants on the left bank on their way to the water. Unfortunately, the wind carried our scent to them when we were still a couple of hundred yards away, but a little later I secured a close-up of one of them in the water on the opposite bank, the wind being then in our favour. Shortly after this, I witnessed one of the best scenes of all, for on a slightly wooded hill I saw several white herons flying upwards and alighting, and I knew they were accompanying a herd of elephant which were probably

coming down to drink. Accordingly, I induced the skipper to turn the boat and drop anchor, hoping they would choose a drinking place near us. Luckily they came right opposite to us, six of them, although the last of the herd waited suspiciously behind for a short while until he was sure everything was safe. The birds revealed their presence, for they were on the elephants' backs, but, strange to say, as soon as the beasts arrived at the water, the herons flew off and alighted on the river bank, as if waiting for them to finish their drink. Everything was going well, none of the elephant suspecting our presence, until a member of the crew dropped something overboard, and immediately every great ear was spread out, every trunk was waved to and fro, and then, without a sound, the huge creatures turned and disappeared, the herons immediately taking their places on their backs, reminding one of bare-back riders at a circus.

A little farther down the river where the bank was level with the water, I watched an amusing scene enacted by two elephants and their youngsters. One of the youngsters was being coaxed into the water by its mother—in vain. For some time she urged it gently, but when it refused to go, she lost her temper, slapped it with her trunk, and gave it a push to one side. Finally the mother walked off in desperation, the little one running behind her and uttering shrill squeaks, just like a naughty child who has been punished and is trying to get its own back by yelling.

About a mile lower down the river, I sighted eight or nine crocodiles basking on a sand-spit, and although we approached them almost silently, they quietly slid into the river. So I suggested we should anchor close-by and have lunch, during which time I hoped they might emerge again, as I was most anxious to secure a picture of them. Although everything was now quiet and no

movement was apparent on that side of the boat, the crocodiles craftily swam right round us, and came very close, but they were submerged except for their eyes and nostrils. Then I noticed a couple of monitors moving about in the background amongst thin bush, just beyond the place where the crocodiles had been lying in the sand. One of them came right into the open, and started digging, shortly discovering a nest of crocodile's eggs, and within ten minutes had devoured six ! It was distinctly clever of that monitor to take advantage of the crocodiles' brief absence in the water to steal the eggs, which, by the way, are always buried in the sand, where they hatch out by the heat.

And so, in due course, we rapidly glided down the river, animals and birds of countless species grouped on the banks and in the trees, and then on through the papyrus again till we finally emerged into Lake Albert just in time to behold a wonderful sunset, which provided a perfect ending to a truly remarkable journey along thirty miles of the most fascinating river in the world.

And that brings us to a journey which, in reality, has no end, whilst its beginning is lost in the past, for any pilgrimage into Nature's world creates a sense of timelessness, as one journeys through scenes unchanged for centuries.

I have written of creatures large and small, dangerous and harmless; of scenes awe-inspiring and without equal and of vast solitudes where man sees himself in true perspective—a diminutive being in the vast scheme of things. I have described the humours and the tragedies of native and animal life in the continent of Africa, but, above all, I hope I have laid sufficient emphasis on the part which kindness plays wherever men live in close proximity to the dumb creatures of the earth.

Fierce battles there may be; dangers lurking in every

shadow; poisons in the dense, damp foliage; countless mysteries which man will never solve; but over all, emerging even from the most terrifying battle and the darkest storm, is a spirit of understanding, and a touch which sheds beauty over the scene. And there is calmness, too, a quietness to be found only beyond the bounds of civilisation, in which one discovers the real values. As I have repeatedly said in the pages of this book, the finest weapon with which to penetrate Nature is the camera, and not the gun. Admittedly, this may incur risks, but the reward in the form of pictorial records is beyond value, and the glad feeling of the traveller when, once more at home, he reflects on the fact that through all the thousands of miles he has trudged he has harmed no living creature, is something worth all the risks in the world.

I have spent long years with Nature. I have experienced the trials her climatic changes bring down on mortals, and I have come uncomfortably near to death owing to my unquenchable desire to unravel more and more of her enchanting puzzles, without unnecessarily causing any suffering to her creatures. If, therefore, this way of travelling and of living be followed by those who respond to the call of the wild places, I shall feel happy in having drawn attention to the merits of bloodless sport. And, indeed, there is more in it than that. For one can never hope to learn Nature's secrets through cruelty, whereas the kindness which grows with one's understanding of her creatures brings ever fresh insight into her mysteries.